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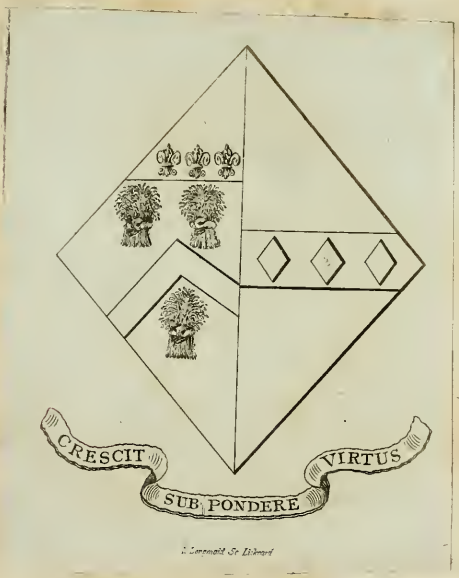

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MY LIFE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"STORIES OF WATERLOO," "WILD SPORTS OF THE WEST,"
&c. &c. &c.

Sir Anthony.—Come here, sirrah! who the devil are you?
Captain Absolute.—'Faith! sir, I'm not quite clear myself: but I'll endeavour to recollect.

The Rivals.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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MY LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

THE —— MILITIA. — COUNTRY QUARTERS. — MY RECEPTION THERE.

"Hark ye, Gil Blas," said he to me one day, "thou art no longer a child, and it is high time for a brisk lad of sixteen, like thee, to push thy fortune in the world."

LE SAGE.

READER, do you recollect the Irish Militia? Have you ever had the good-luck to meet a regiment of the right sort, and dance at their ball, or be waked upon their mess-table? I don't mean one of your city legions—a congregation of runaway apprentices, officered by reduced tradesmen, commanded by a chief corporator, with enough of discipline to escort a deserter, and sufficient spirit to steal linen from a hedge. Nor do I mean a northern battalion,

where all were drawn men,* who, poor souls! had they been permitted but a choice, would have never left the loom for the musket; whose officers were moral and married, and their regimental establishment of woman-kind on the scale of the 4th Veterans, in which every private was allowed a wife, and the adjutant had two. None of these do I mean; but one of the celebrated corps embodied in counties touching on that blessed stream, the Shannon; commanded by *raal* gentlemen; all, from the colonel to the colour-bearer, keeping hack or hunter; carrying off diurnally his half-cooper of port; fighting his man as soon as he could find a decent quarrel; and eschewing matrimony as piously as the parish priest himself.

To such a distinguished corps it was my good-fortune to be attached. My letters of introduction procured me immediate attention from the field-officers; and with the rest I was as intimate in two days, as if I had been born in the regiment. I learned the manual and platoon; got on from a pint of port until I

* Soldiers chosen by ballot, in war time, and obliged to find a substitute, or serve in person.

could walk steadily under a bottle; and in three months was so perfect in drill, that I was deemed competent to take the duties of a worn-out lieutenant, who had been allowed to go home on a sick-leave.

The detachment to which I was ordered off, was quartered in a small town adjoining the mountains, and stationed there to protect half-a-dozen gaugers, who were waging war against illicit whiskey. It consisted of two companies: one was commanded by Captain O'Moore, and he was mad; the other by Captain Daly, and he was married. Of the subalterns, two were sick and absent, and the other twain sent from head-quarters, being, as the colonel considered, unsuited for the corps. One drank water, kept Lent, played the fiddle, and professed anti-duelling principles: the other, because the commander disliked him for some cause with which we were unacquainted; he was, they said, reserved and unsocial, and, from his brusque manners and cynical disposition, generally unpopular.

I had despatched my servant with my traps on the preceding day; and, when I reached my

new quarters at dusk, found my apartments ready for my reception. As the town was not a regular military station, the men were billeted out, and the officers occupied a temporary barrack. This was a ruinous house belonging to a gentleman who had once possessed extensive properties in the neighbourhood, but had contrived to let the "dirty acres" slip through his fingers, and not even retain "the family pictures." The division of the mansion kept the numerous inmates tolerably apart, although under the same roof. The madman seized on the lower portion of the premises; the married man cantoned himself in the right wing of the first-floor; the centre chamber was occupied by his daughter; and in the left extremity my household goods were deposited. In the upper apartments, the cynic had established himself above the captain; the fiddler over me; and thus was I placed between two nuisances—a noisy lunatic, and the most execrable musician that ever tormented catgut with horsehair.

While Phil Bradley, my attendant, took my horse, he informed me that Captain Daly had left his card on my table, with a polite invita-

tion to dinner. This was a customary civility to a new-comer, and, of course, I accepted it. Mounting to my domicile, I made a hasty toilet, and had just concluded, when a tap at the door announced a visiter, and the gallant captain presented himself in form.

Had Captain Daly flourished fifty years before, I would have given my corporal oath that he was the archetype of Smollet's Weazle. Never, indeed, were two commanders so much alike, and, for the life of me, I could scarcely preserve my gravity. The captain bowed, delivered a complimentary speech, to which I returned a suitable reply: he hoped I was not tired—long ride—heavy roads—dinner ready; and next moment I found myself in the chamber of state, and in due form was presented to Mrs. and Miss Daly.

The commander's helpmate formed as striking a contrast to her amiable husband in physical solidity, as substance does to shadow. She was at the middle age, a stout and florid personage, who when young had been undoubtedly handsome. Her corpulency had not rendered her inactive; and a very superficial ac-

quaintance was enough to prove, that in domestic management she was the stouter vessel.

The young lady inherited her mother's comeliness, while to her papa there seemed no more striking affinity than the generic characteristics which zoologists ascribe as common to the whole family of man. She was some twenty, "ay, by the mass! or nearer" twenty-one; and her dark eyes, pretty teeth, and *espiégle* air, assorted well with a round and Hebe-looking figure, which a few years would probably increase to stoutness, if not obesity.

Such was the party to whom I was introduced, and who were to be my next-door neighbours during my sojourn in country quarters. My appetite, after a twenty mile ride, was unexceptionable, and I yearned for the moment when dinner should appear; nor was I long in expectancy.

"Lucinda, my dare," said the captain's lady, "just pop ye'r head over the banister, and tell Judy to dish. Misther Bleak, ye'll excuse us this turn, it's only pot-luck ye'll get; but thus we soldiers live:" and she laughed uproariously. Meanwhile the com-

mander extracted a cork at the sideboard, that exploded like a pocket-pistol; the butler, to a Boyne salmon placed *vis-à-vis* a stubble-goose, from which a perfume, not exactly that of "Araby the blest," exhaled; there being a seasoned pudding in the interior of the bird, the handywork of Mrs. Daly herself.

Nothing could go off better than the entertainment. I ate like a traveller, but Captain D. beat me hollow, although, as his lady whispered, "he put it into a bad skin." Good eating produced good drinking; the bottle of sherry vanished with the cheese, and the commander politely inquired, whether I would be for "screw or kettle." I chose the latter; and Mrs. Daly, from a private store brought forward a square flask of excellent capacity, which contained, as she averred, a liquor at the same time potent and pleasant, for "a man might take his stoup, and rise for early parade next morning fresh as a daisy."

If Mrs. Daly was great in culinary compositions, her skill was not inferior in fabricating what she termed a "stiff tumbler." Of course, she was placed over the kettle-department for the

evening, and we were as happy as Irish kings. Miss Lucinda had been for two years an inmate of Mrs. Dowdall's seminary in Athenry, and there had learned the science of sweet sounds; and, at her papa's request, sate down to favour me with a specimen of her powers, vocal and instrumental. The music-book was open, the symphony of that sentimental air "The wealth of the cottage" had commenced, when, prompt as an echo, a melancholy and irregular scraping answered it, announcing that the artist overhead was preparing an accompaniment.

"Blessed mother!" ejaculated Mrs. Daly, "it's that devil Kenrick! Sure, I thought the rheumatism in his shoulder would have kept him quiet for a week or two. Captain, my dare, send Tony up; tell him to say the sergeant-major's child's a dyin', or Mrs. Murphy's in the straw, or anything that'll stop him, wid my blessin' into the bargain."

But before Tony could execute his mission, a new alarm arose without, and the lower door of the building was dashed in, as if a nine-pound shot had struck it. A yell and volley of oaths that rung through the barrack succeeded; the

symphony stopped; the fiddle was heard no more; Captain Daly turned pale; Miss Lucinda crossed herself; while the hostess exclaimed, with a fervour that bespoke the sincerity of her imprecation, "May the curse of Cromwell attend ye night and day, Philip O'Moore!"

For some time the noise below was astounding. Tables were overturned, and chairs pelted about the room like oranges; and a tin horn, the barking of a terrier, the captain's yells, and the servant's roars of "murder," pealed through the building. While the tumult was at its height, a soldier rushed in, and begged a candle for the love of Jasus! as his master was in the dark, and "making smithereens of everything." But before the valet could be accommodated, Captain O'Moore added himself to our party.

His first appearance alarmed me, and no wonder. He was a tall, powerful, and athletic man, with amazingly broad shoulders, and legs that would surprise a coal-heaver. His dress was unique. He wore an old weather-beaten hunting-cap, to which it was his pleasure to affix a fox's brush. His frock had been once scarlet, but, from age and hard usage, the pri-

mitive hue was doubtful. A calf-skin vest overlapped leather inexpressibles. One leg was encased in a jockey-boot, while the other was contented with a hessian. In his right hand he carried a heavy brass-handled thong-whip, under his left arm a brown valise, and a rough, wire-haired bull-terrier followed him.

It was evident that the captain's company was an honour neither expected nor desired. None bade him welcome; and I returned what I thought an impertinent salutation, with what Mrs. Malaprop calls "proper spirit." Daly frowned, his wife blazed, Lucinda pouted, and I looked on, a quiet, but not an inattentive spectator.

"Why the divil do none of you bid me sit down?" was the intruder's opening address. "Lucy, your nose will soon be as red as the old bird's—kiss me? Pooh! how coy you are! Mother Daly, mix me a tumbler—same strength as the last you take before you go to bed."

"Me drink, you scoundrel!" cried the lady, firing at the charge.

"Lucy, what a loss you were at,—should have taken me at the hop, and gone to the ball.

Why, there was not such a turn-out these three years. Nicked Ralph Shaughnessy, by the by. Bet him ten pound to five, that I danced a set bare-legged. Slipped out, peeled, got boot-boy and brushes, laid on Day and Martin, blacked and polished—returned, pulled out Miss M'Affee, who 's blind as a beetle. Hands across—down the middle—finished the set—and won the money before a soul knew skin from silk."

"Lord, what lies you tell," said Mrs. Daly.

"Lies! By this virgin hand!" and he kissed his own, "I have not bounced since I swore you never—" and he finished the sentence in pantomime, by turning his little finger upwards, in an elevation that conveyed his meaning correctly. The lady understood it, for she seized the kettle, and menaced hostile demonstrations.

"Phil Moore, don't raise me—don't I say; or, by all the crosses in a Scotsman's kilt! I'll scald ye if I hang for it!"

The captain seemed alarmed, and fell back a pace or two. "Phoo!" he exclaimed, "a joke 's a joke: and you know I love you! If old bare-bones,"—and he pointed to the master of

the revels—"was planted, I'd make you Mistress O'Moore. But I expect some company, and you'll give me the *matarials*, won't ye?"

"Not a drap—not as much as would blind a midge. Off wid ye, Phil Moore, don't provoke me."

"Don't call me nicknames, Mother Daly. Will you stick an O before the Moore, if you please, and not dock me as if I was a Daly. But the matarials"—and he dashed his hands into the sugar-bowl, and transported the contents into the capacious pockets of his hunting-frock. His next clutch was at the bottle, but in that Mrs. Daly anticipated him.

"Lend it to me, *jewel!* give it, *astore!*" quoth the commander, changing his battery from force to flattery.

"Not a drop: not as much as would pison ye. Arrah! for shame—sind out and buy it, as yeer neighbours do."

"If I have a tester to bless myself upon, may I be hanged or married! Choose your worst," said he of the red jacket; "I lost my money at lansquenet, and my boot dancing in a bonfire."

"Well," returned the dame, "and ye stole one in its place!"

"No; I borrowed it, as I will the *poteein*. I was up at cockcrow—meandered through the inn—and at a bagman's door, found a boot that fitted me. I pulled it on—and left a leg and top, in place of a leg and bottom. Do, give me the stuff; the ladies will be waiting."

"*Ladies!* not a drop."

"You won't?"

"I won't!" repeated Mrs. Daly. "By this cross! I won't," and she described a mysterious figure on the table with her finger.

"Why, then, by this cross, you will!" rejoined the commander, undoing the straps of the portmanteau, which he kicked upon the floor, and then jumped on the sofa. Captain Daly anticipating coming danger, mounted the sideboard. A squall from the lady hostess, a shriek from Miss Lucinda followed—while, after a twist or two, a badger evolved from the valise, and, attacked by the terrier, trundled under the table, and a furious combat between the quadrupeds commenced.

Both ladies had gained a chair, and with

shame I acknowledge that I was fairly on the table. Philip O'Moore by encouraging yells excited the dog; while, favoured by the angular disposition of the sideboard, the badger offered a stout resistance. "Mind your legs, ladies; his bite's mortal. Are ye safe, Captain Daly?" said the proprietor.

"Sibby, for the sake of the Virgin! give him the bottle!" was the reply.

"Take it," said the lady, "and my black curse along wid it! Balfe the robber, was a born gintleman to you, Phil Moore!"

"Honor bright—is the whiskey mine? Say the word, Mother Daly, and I'll manage long-nose in a hurry," cried he of the red coat, as with his dog's assistance he secured the badger; then, seizing the bottle, he made his exit with a view-halloo that nearly deafened us, and retreated to his own den.

His absence restored order; Captain Daly descended from the sideboard, and the ladies resumed their chairs. Tony was directed to get a grilled bone; and in the interim, Mrs. Daly proposed a game at cards, and *Five-and-forty* was the one selected. Lucy and I were

partners, and after an hour's play, I found myself minus a pound, and very desperately enamoured. Never was man more delighted with his evening's entertainment than I when I retired for the night. True, I had lost a bank-note; but Lucy had pressed my foot under the table with her own, and that was surely worth the money twice told.

CHAPTER II.

LOVE AND PIQUET.

Up rose the yellow moon—
The devil's in the moon for mischief; they
Who called her chaste, methinks, began too soon
Their nomenclature; there is not a day,
The longest, not the twenty-first of June,
Sees half the business in a wicked way,
On which three single hours of moonshine smile—
And then she looks so modest all the while!

BYRON.

I FOUND country quarters far more agreeable than I imagined, when ordered off from Drogheda; and in a few days made myself pretty comfortable in my rackety room, and the adjacent closet my dormitory, to which I became hourly more attached, as it was next to Miss Lucinda's chamber, with whom, by means of a decayed panel in the wainscot, I maintained a sort of Pyramus and Thisbe

communication. My military duties were not severe, as I had only to accompany the gauger when he required assistance, in turn of duty with the cynic and fiddler. With these brethren of the sword, my intimacy was never great. The former offended me by the severity of his remarks upon the Daly family, and more particularly Miss Lucinda. The fiddler was a fool, a bore, and a bigot; he believed firmly in the intercession of holy women, used holy water, frequented holy wells, and declared that heaven was unattainable by any means but a fish diet.

With Captain O'Moore I held a guarded intercourse. I found him eternally a borrower, and greatly disposed to treat me as a schoolboy, if I would but allow it. Indeed, he was anything but a safe companion. Twice he persuaded me to shoot in his company. On the first expedition, he managed to upset a cobble, in which we were ferrying ourselves over to an island in a lake, and gave me a swim for my life, which I preserved with the loss of my fowling-piece. On the other occasion, he fired at a gamekeeper, and to stop a prosecu-

tion, we were obliged to buy off the wounded man, the subsidy coming from my purse; for, to do him justice, I never saw any portion of the circulating medium in his possession during our acquaintance, except what he won from me in teaching me piquet; a course of which he recommended as an essential accomplishment for a military man. My neighbours, the Dalys, were, therefore, my chief companions—indeed, we nearly lived together. Not that this society was altogether the most desirable, for he, poor man! was miserably hen-pecked, and she a regular white sergeant, who swore like a trooper. But Lucy was the magnet that attracted me; and if we ever dreamed of establishing a platonic flirtation, her honoured parents gave us the best of fair-play, and showed, by leaving us everlastingly together, how highly they estimated our prudence and discretion.

Among Lucy's numerous accomplishments, she might honestly include bold and graceful riding. She had a very pretty roan pony; and when the weather permitted it, we rode over the country *tête-à-tête*, wherever fancy directed.

I had now been a month detached; March

was going out with its proverbial mildness, and, seduced by the fineness of the day, we had prolonged our ride, and found it later than usual when we alighted at the barrack-door. The cynic was standing on the steps, yet he offered no assistance to my fair companion in dismounting; and I thought his cold acknowledgment, as she passed him, had more of a sneer than a smile in its expression. I felt piqued, and I would have been happy to have resented it had I only known how; but when a man seeks a quarrel, it is wonderful how soon fortune stands his friend.

That night the gauger sent in a requisition for a party. From a cause which it is unnecessary to explain, it was doubtful on whom the turn of duty fell; and whether the honour of attending the exciseman should devolve upon me, the cynic, or the fiddler, was what lawyers call, a point for argument. Indeed, under common circumstances, the thing would not have caused me a thought; the duty was but an agreeable night-walk, and never at a sweeter season did Philistines disturb an honest distiller. But I had private reasons for wishing

to avoid still-hunting; and besides, I was smarting under real or imaginary discourtesy.

We met in the orderly-room; O'Moore was there, and I think encouraged the cynic, and increased the misunderstanding between us. Words ran high; I was petulant, and he positive; the breach widened, until after delivering myself of a speech that I opined would require a hostile message, I left the room abruptly. It is right to say, that the fiddler, from a characteristic love of harmony, I suppose, when matters looked squally, good-naturedly cut short the cause of controversy, by taking the duty himself.

Youth will be foolish. A free untrammelled boyhood, a precocious maturity of constitution, intercourse with wild society, familiarity with wild opinions; all united in pushing me upon the stage of manhood years before a more delicate frame, or a more regular and refined education, would have permitted it. I had entered the world; I felt myself the member of a chivalrous profession; the object, for the first time, of woman's love—and fancied myself an ill-used

man, when, in years and experience of human life, I was no better than a froward school-boy.

Still in high dudgeon, I walked up and down the court-yard, when a tap upon the shoulder made me turn briskly round, and Aylmer stood beside me.

"I have sought you, Mr. Blake—"

I interrupted him—"And I trust found me readily. But would not your friend save some trouble to us both?"

Aylmer smiled. "I am afraid I must disappoint you, Mister Blake, and you will have to look out for somebody else to practise at. No, no; when Frank Aylmer wants a quarrel, he must look for some other than Cæsar Blake's son."

I started; and he continued—

"I knew not till a few minutes since that you were the son of my valued friend.—Yes, I was his comrade and companion, when my years were green as your own; and he saved my commission by sacrificing his. But no more of this now; we will talk of it to-morrow. See, where that cowardly scoundrel"—and he

pointed to O'Moore, who was evidently watching the result—"is straining eye and ear to ascertain whether his wishes will be gratified by our quarrelling. Leave him in uncertainty. Jack, be on your guard; you are at this moment on the verge of ruin; but I can—I will save you, and to-morrow shall tell how." He wrung my hand, and left me more astonished than I can describe. I came out, dying for an opportunity to mark my dislike of Aylmer, and I returned with a brotherly regard for that very man, whom, but a few minutes back, I was anxious to assassinate as gentlemen do the thing.

I entered my room a sadder man by far than when I perambulated the court-yard with an impending duel on my hands. Something in Aylmer's warning to me, and his manner to the Dalys, raised up a thousand teazing and alarming doubts. What was the danger—whence was the blow to come—and how was it to be avoided? I could not even conjecture, and I wished earnestly for morning to arrive, when I should meet my father's friend, and learn the whole. For a while this uncertainty

annoyed me, but gradually apprehension wore away, and other and softer feelings succeeded.

Never on a lovelier night did a young ensign peep from a barrack-window. The moon—the beautiful moon, round as a drum-head, was shining gloriously. The river murmured sweetly, the breeze had sighed its last, and not a sound was heard but the barking of the village dogs, and measured tread of the sentry walking "his lonely round" beneath me. "There is a dangerous silence in that hour," singeth my Lord Byron, and so have all poets sung, from William Shakspeare to Walter Scott; for it appears,

> "The silver light which, hallowing tree and tower,
> Sheds beauty and deep softness o'er the whole,
> Breathes also to the heart, and o'er it throws
> A loving languor, which is not repose."

All this I felt, no doubt; for though wisdom had cried in the street, I was, alas! insensible to her warning.

Confound poetry and old houses! The chink in the wainscot, originally so limited in its dimensions as to barely permit a billet to slip

through, had gradually enlarged until "Lalla Rookh" found room enough to pass; daily the wood-work became more rickety and infirm; and the panel at last dropped out altogether!

This was an unfortunate accident, and what was to be done? I proposed that we should consult a carpenter; but Lucy, an older soldier than I, prudently explained the danger; we might be brought in for barrack damages, and therefore agreed, that for our short time we would prop it up as we best could, and keep the misfortune to ourselves. Yet, as it turned out afterwards, it would have been better had we called in the carpenter.

I said that Captain O'Moore had kindly undertaken to instruct me in piquet; but I found him an expensive master, as he would only play for money, he being an enemy to misspending time. Now, Lucy suggested, that she, though not an adept, was partial to that game—we could play together—and doubtless, a mutual improvement would bless our efforts. As a companion, Lucy was infinitely preferable; and, as a teacher, greatly cheaper. The captain played for half-crowns, and won invariably.

Poor Lucy wagered nothing but kisses, and regularly rose a loser.

There is a cursed fascination attending play that ruins half the world. I, God knows! have proved it. Games of chance are bad—hells destructive—but piquet I look upon as doubly dangerous—it is a quiet, scientific, sentimental sort of business, and never played comfortably but in sober *tête-à-tête*. Captain Daly was an early man, and his lady said a thousand times, that one hour's sleep before midnight was worth a dozen after it. Lucy and I were no sluggards; and, in the innocency of our hearts, thought there could be no harm in playing a sober game ourselves. It was but stepping through the panel; nobody would be the wiser; and if we made mistakes, there was no critical eye to comment on our blundering.

Nor did we determine on this course of cards without due consideration. At a late hour, lights, if seen in either of our apartments, might occasion observation. This, young ladies, no matter how conscious they may be of integrity of intention, should eschew. Lucy, to do her justice, said so; and to avoid giving any handle to idle

gossip, discovered that candles were unnecessary, for, as we played on honour, moonlight would do.

God help us! little did we imagine how rudely our harmless amusement would be interrupted! How our piquet-playing was discovered I never ascertained, as the secret of the panel was only known to Lucy and myself; but no doubt, some unlucky *mal-adresse* caused our ruin.

It had struck two, and I remember the deal was Lucy's. Suddenly we heard a whispering without—we listened—it ceased.—Pshaw! it was only the servants retiring to Mount Rascal, as they termed the garret. It was no illusion. After a brief pause Captain Daly thundered at the door, and demanded admittance. Of course I prepared to abdicate: though easily resolved, this was more difficult to accomplish; for, by accident or treachery, Mother Daly had gained an entrance into my apartments, and like a determined warrior, threw herself into the breach —I mean the broken panel.

Meanwhile, the lock of Lucy's door yielded, and an angry father and Captain O'Moore pre-

sented themselves. Mrs. Daly would have joined the company, but in the essay she stuck fast in the orifice, and after various and painful efforts was obliged to abandon the attempt, and unite herself with the main body, by the customary means of entrance.

Alas! everything appeared against us. Piquet by moonlight was considered most irregular—O'Moore laughed at the idea—and the very cards declared unfavourably, for on examination it appeared, that in the hurry of the moment we had been playing from the whole pack!

CHAPTER III.

THE CONSEQUENCES.

Is 't wise or fitting causeless to explore
For facts against a virtuous woman's fame?

BYRON.

Upon my soul, Jack, thou art a very impudent fellow! To do you justice, I think I never saw a piece of more consummate assurance!

The Rivals.

NEVER since the birth of Hoyle, did two of his admirers cut a more ridiculous figure than did myself and the captain's heiress. Tony, to add to our embarrassment, introduced a pair of candles—while she hid herself in the window-curtains, and I stood doggedly awaiting the result of discovery in mute astonishment. Mrs. Daly's opening salutation was astounding. This night would be the death of her!—her darling husband would not long survive a broken heart!—and, as

to the best of daughters—meaning thereby Miss Lucinda—why the sooner the cold grave was her portion the better! Thus, for my unhappy partiality for piquet, it was quite clear that I would be the direct cause of annihilating a whole family, and demolish the Dalys, root and branch.

Nor was the captain, though generally a man of peace, unmoved on this occasion. Whether it was for instant action or stage effect, I shall not pretend to say, but certainly he looked very formidable, as he had tucked his old toasting-iron under his arm. To do him justice, he never attempted to draw; but, as he muttered something about "reparation or satisfaction," he touched the hilt repeatedly. Captain O'Moore was still more desperate; his speech was almost the echo of his friend's, but far more truculent; for he changed the "or" into "and," insisting that I should marry on the spot, and give Captain Daly a meeting at daylight, and that into the bargain. As if the uproar was not loud enough, Tony thought proper to show that he was not insensible to the family misfortune. Approaching his young mistress, he set up a

yell that would have startled a funeral. "Warroo! warroo! warroo!"* he exclaimed, "Miss Lucy dare—arrah! tell us the worst at once, and make your parents asy, by sayin' ye are ruined!"

Now, however I might tolerate reproaches from the captain and his lady, I felt no inclination to listen to the hectoring of O'Moore, or Tony's jeremiads. With a thundering box I stretched the valet on the carpet, and changed his lament into roars of murder, that would frighten a fair. Indeed, had the noise not already awakened the household, Tony's outcries would have disturbed the sleeping beauty. Every inmate of the mansion, in all varieties of costume, was seen peeping through open doors, or craning over the banisters; while, to my relief, and the manifest confusion of both the commanders, the cynic in night-gown and slippers added himself to the group already collected "in my lady's chamber."

Aylmer's appearance was the signal for a fresh display of Mother Daly's grief, and her lord's threats of vengeance; but, after the first burst, they ceased, for it was astonishing with

* A Connaught ebullition of distress.

what composure and indifference the cynic regarded this affecting scene. He requested, in the coolest tone imaginable, to be informed "Why he was awakened?" and hinted, that if at two o'clock in the morning it was our fancy to amuse ourselves with hide-and-seek, we should not fall to loggerheads about the game; and also, confine our gambols to the lower story. Then came a general attempt at explanation; but, as we all opened together, detached portions of our respective speeches only could be heard. Mrs. Daly talked of matrimony and ruination; her husband of honourable redress; Captain O'Moore opined that an immediate meeting was unavoidable; and I muttered something, "about innocence and a fondness for piquet." After listening with polite attention, Aylmer appeared to comprehend the business tolerably; begged to speak to his young friend, meaning me, for a few moments; and without waiting a reply, beckoned me to follow, which I did, although O'Moore seemed inclined to make a demonstration towards the door and refuse me egress.

We entered my apartment. "You have

made a pretty kettle of fish of this affair," said the cynic.

I began to lay the blame on cards and rotten wood-work. "Pshaw!" he continued, "we have no time for nonsense. Tell me, my good sir, what is it your intention to do? I promised last evening to be your friend, although I did not then anticipate how promptly my good offices would be required. You appear to have two choices—matrimony, or a fight. If you decide upon entering the holy estate, you will need a friend to assist at the ceremony, which, I presume, will be immediate." I shook my head. "Nay, early marriage has its advocates. In your case it may be for the best: your lady has considerable moral and military experience, and the advantage of you by five or six years. No doubt you will club pay, and form a delightful family party. Mrs. Daly will brew the punch, make the puddings, and scold the servant; the captain rock the cradle, and dry-nurse your's, or anybody's babe, belonging to the establishment. And then, the example! that is worth all be-

sides: a steady—sober—virtuous married man at sixteen! Why you will live in story!"

I could not but smile at the flattering picture of domestic felicity that I was to realize; and he continued:—

"Then you are not for matrimony, I perceive; you prefer settling matters in another way: and in that case, too, you will require a friend."

I thanked him for his kindness, and begged to commit myself entirely to his directions.

"Very well," said my counsellor; "the sooner a bad business is ended, the better. I presume you have no particular fancy for shooting at that scarecrow of a captain?"

"Indeed I have not. Fire at him, under any circumstances, I shall not. Of course I must meet him, and allow him to target me for a shot or two."

"I think not. But come, we must join them. Reject matrimony altogether. Then will O'Moore insist upon an immediate shooting match. Decline wasting powder upon Daly, and turn on his coadjutor with the ferocity of a

tiger-cat. Never under a lion's exterior was concealed a more coward heart. Do this, and I will stake an orange-peeling against Miss Lucy's character—and those are heavy odds—that you sleep in a whole skin to-night, and suffer no more in purse than person, excepting in reparation of the wainscot that between you and Lucy was so unfortunately broken down."

If Aylmer and I had fortified ourselves with secret council, I suspect the captains and the ladies had been similarly engaged. The scene of the interview was delicately changed from the fair one's room to the commander's chamber; Miss Lucy, of course, being left to indulge in "secret sorrow." There was much awkwardness when we presented ourselves. I took courage, and commenced by bearing most honourable testimony to the moral conduct of Miss Daly and myself. "Appearances might be unfavourable; but we were young; it was foolish certainly to play cards when we should be sleeping; but, after all, it was only an error in judgment, and circumspection for the future must redeem our mistake."

During my address, which I considered very

conclusive in re-establishing the lady's reputation, the captain preserved a sulky silence; O'Moore exhibited symptoms of incredulity; and Mother Daly threatened to become hysterical. With difficulty, between sobs and sighs, she made her plaint. "Mr. Bleak," meaning me, "might clear himself; but if he took the vestment, who would believe the story? Lucy—the Lord look down upon her!—had got a blast;—and nobody worth a pair of traheeins* would, in matrimony, touch her with the tongs. Blessed be God! her daughter was a gentlewoman. She had not much money, it was true, but the little she had was ready—none of your Galway securities, or Roscommon rent-charges, but Lord Tireragh's note of hand for five hundred pounds, attested by two living witnesses, and recoverable in three terms, as any attorney would declare."

Then Captain O'Moore figured in. "The business," he said, "was ridiculous; the thing was in a nutshell. He was a soldier—he could

* *Traheeins* are the legs of Connemara stockings, which case the limbs of the traveller without cramping his toes. They are much worn by gentlemen who consider shoes superfluous.

stand anything; but, honour bright! who the devil would believe such balderdash? Piquet was a good game—he, the captain, liked it: no man understood play better — bones and billiards, drafts or dominos, all the same. He had lost fifty on the bellows, and won five hundred on the plate-warmer; but, by moonlight, he had never touched paper. It was all Tara-hill talk: Lucy was left without a rag of reputation, and had no more character than a priest's niece."

Mr. Aylmer thought "Further discussion was unnecessary; it was better to come to business at once. Might he inquire, under the present unpleasant circumstances, what was expected from his young friend?"

Mrs. Daly lost no time in responding. "It was a shame for Mr. Aylmer to ask such a silly question; she would have expected more sinse from an ould officer and a staid* man. Nothing at all at all was wanted, but that Misther Bleak should make her little girl an honest woman, that was all."

"And should Mr. Blake—for it was impossible to account for the fancies of young gentle-

* *Staid* is synonymous with *steady*.

men—feel indisposed to contract matrimony at sixteen ?"

"Oh ! then the course was straight as a halbert. Honour bright ! sod directly—no delay—ten paces—and fire away till one was nicked !"

"And who, Captain O'Moore, is it your good pleasure should be thus agreeably amused ?" said I.

In reply, he pointed to the little commander, who seemed horribly alarmed at the pleasant prospect his friend's alternative placed before him, and then nodded to me.

"Allow me, sir," I replied, "to cut short this matter, by telling you plainly and decisively that I will not marry ; and I altogether decline the honour of shooting at Captain Daly."

"What, not fight ! and hold a commission in the —— regiment ?"

"Softly, gallant sir : that I have *not* said. Fight I will. He who presumes to doubt my courage, may prove it as speedily as he pleases ; and if any man dares assert that Miss Lucinda's unhappy interview with me was anything but innocent and accidental, I shall crop his ears off, and indeed, I feel strong inclination to

commence with one of the present company;" and I fixed my eye upon the bravo. His colour waned; he looked black as midnight, clenched his fist, and appeared half inclined to strike me. I stepped back, and taking my sabre from a chair, where I had accidentally thrown it after coming from evening parade, continued: "Captain O'Moore, if I am understood aright, it will be unnecessary to add a word to what I have spoken. Your friend (for with you I hold no farther conversation) will find me readily. I have been the cause of detaining too long from bed this good company. Come, Aylmer." I bowed formally to Captain Daly—lower still to his lady wife—brushed clothes with Philip O'Moore—and left the room, followed by the cynic.

Obvious reasons induced me to abandon my own chamber for a temporary shakedown on Aylmer's sofa. Neither of us, however, felt inclined to seek our couches: tumblers were paraded, the kettle boiled, and down we sat to talk over the night's adventures, and arrange measures to meet any legal or honourable consequences that might attend piquet-playing by

moonlight. Morning dawned before our conclave ended; and, from the shrewd and caustic remarks that during our *tête-à-tête* fell from my singular companion, I perceived he was one who had studied mankind deeply, and I longed to learn from his own lips, what I suspected would be a strange detail—his history.

CHAPTER IV.

CONFESSIONS OF A CYNIC.

'Tis said that persons living on annuities
Are longer lived than others—God knows why,
Unless to plague the granters—yet so true it is,
That some, I really think, do never die;
Of any creditors, the worst a Jew it is,
And *that's* their mode of furnishing supply:
In my young days they lent me cash that way,
Which I found very troublesome to pay.

Don Juan.

Well, that's the prettiest shawl—as I 'm alive! You 'll give it me? *Beppo.*

Breakfast ended, morning parade was over, and neither friendly nor hostile visiter appeared —none of the *dramatis personæ* of last night honoured the barrack-yard with their presence —the fiddler alone answered the call of duty; and it seemed that by general consent, the com-

mand of the garrison would devolve upon the descendant of Orpheus.

More than once, during our *tête-à-tête*, Aylmer supported his opinions by a reference to personal experience, and I pressed him to tell me his private history. He smiled.

"I believe, my dear Blake, I shall best point the moral I am preaching by doing so, and prove to you how easily young gentlemen can ruin themselves. I shall not be tedious. I entered the world an orphan and at sixteen—my fortune a pair of colours and a few hundred pounds. I had a good constitution, animal spirits in abundance, and as much knowledge of the world as a certain Lothario of my acquaintance, who shall be nameless.

"My earlier military career is so closely connected with your father's history, that I shall merely tell you that I assisted in despoiling Miss M'Namara's supper, and in stuffing her chimney afterwards. To me the consequences might have been ruinous; but your father saved my commission and sacrificed his own. I heard of his death in Jamaica, where we were soon after sent; and it is not for me

to add how bitterly the untimely fate of my generous friend distressed me.

" We continued in the West Indies for five years, broiling under a tropical sun, and tormented by a tyrannical colonel. Conceive my delight when, by the most unexpected freak of fortune, I found myself liberated from the thrall of an ill-tempered martinet, and owner of ten thousand pounds in stock, and fifteen hundred a-year in dirty acres. A relative, too distant for me to build on for anything beyond a mourning-ring, had pleased to register me his heir—and a man who would not have assisted me in purchasing a sword-knot, left me the scrapings-up of a long and miserly existence.

" I did not dally, as you may believe, in Jamaica. Directly Up-Park was abandoned; I threw myself into the first sugar-ship that sailed — ' courier-like,' reached the shores of Britain—exchanged into a light-cavalry regiment, which in six months I left for the Blues.

" I was twenty-two that very day on which I mounted my first guard at St. James's. I was tolerably well-looking, pliable enough to adapt myself to the fripperies of fashion, with a

round sum at Hammersley's, and an income sufficient for more than moderate enjoyment of the numerous pleasures which the most profligate capital in Europe offers to the youthful voluptuary. I had, or ought to have had, some knowledge of the world, for I entered on the theatre of life as early as yourself; and I should have known the value of money, having so long existed on the miserable pay of a lieutenant; yet, in three years, I dissipated a goodly inheritance, and was a ruined man at twenty-five!"

"And how, in this brief space," said I, interrupting him, "could you manage to wreck your fortunes so completely?"

The cynic smiled bitterly.

"Nothing more easily effected, my boy; with the assistance of a noble earl, two or three lords, a baronet, half-a-dozen M.P.'s, a club, a hell, and a woman.

"You must know, that among my fancies, I had determined, whenever it pleased me to contract matrimony, to select a high-born wife. I, the descendant of an ancient line, could not contaminate my blood by a union

with aught but some scion from a noble tree. Now, the gallant lord who commanded my troop was heir to one of the oldest marquisates in Britain: he condescended, from the moment I joined, to patronize me; gradually we became inseparable; and in due time were accounted the Pylades and Orestes of the Blues. Indeed, never was youthful friendship more warm and disinterested: he brought me everywhere; introduced me to his family; put me up in a club: his friends were mine; his tradesmen supplied me; I would not purchase a pointer without his consent; and, at last, did all but swear by him.

"He was, poor fellow! miserably embarrassed; but his distresses, when I discovered them, interested me for him the more. I had money unemployed at my bankers, and would I allow my kind and noble friend to be inconvenienced for a thousand? No, I offered him assistance—it was freely and liberally accepted; and in return, he taught me play, made arrangements for me with a *figurante*, allowed me a share in his turf speculations, and was to me more than a brother. Yet fortune frowned upon him

constantly: his horses broke down—his run at cards was abominable;—but, hang the jade! she has been notorious always for treating men of merit scurvily.

"My friend had a sister, rather *passée* and proud as Lucifer. She was a fine woman, however; and her blood, Jack—her progenitors had ridden side by side with the Norman bastard, and scrawled their autographs to Magna Charta in the field of Runymede. What could I do but love her? and she smiled upon a suit which her brother avowedly encouraged. But alas! there was an obstacle; her father was so lofty in his nobility, that nothing beneath an earl's coronet could be offered or entertained. Time however might do much: I was recommended patience, and of course submitted. But in private, the lady of my love was kind; she heard my vows, and told me I was not indifferent to her. We walked, and rode, and danced, and flirted, until our union was chronicled in the Morning Post as one of those to occur at the end of the season. But, alas! the season ended me.

"It was very remarkable how much Lady Ag-

nes deferred to my taste in articles of fancy and *virtù*. She scarcely visited a jeweller's without me; and I was as well known at Howel and James's as their own bookkeeper. Her allowance from her noble father I found out was very small; and with an exemplary self-denial, she would have declined purchasing many a Cashmere shawl or *recherché* muff, had I not delicately contrived to pay for them, and force her to honour me by their acceptance. She loved *bijouterie* dearly; but the same high principle prevented her indulging expensive inclinations. But I rarely failed in discovering the object of her fancy, procured it directly, and laid it an offering on her shrine. And was I not well rewarded? When I placed the gem upon her finger, I pressed the beautiful hand of a peeress in her own right; and if the gift was unusually magnificent, her lips were not refused to mine, and I experienced the exquisite delight of kissing a descendant of the Conqueror! Never were lover's favours more graciously and gracefully acknowledged—never woman's gratitude warmer; although, indeed, we never played moonlight piquet—because, probably, Lady Ag-

nes was too much an adept to waste time and instructions on a bungler.

" Meanwhile, my funds diminished fast; my account at Hammersley's was overdrawn; my rents anticipated by drafts upon my agent; and I was booked by every west-end tradesman, from the coach to the cane maker.

" This was an awkward discovery; but I was not inclined to sink a fallen star without a struggle. As yet I had never tried my hand at bill or bond, except to oblige my dear friend Lord ——, whom I joined in securities for some thousands. The tribe of Israel were untouched—there was a mine in reserve, an El Dorado waiting for my acceptance. I mentioned to my noble companion that I was hard-up, and then indeed he proved his friendship. He introduced me to his own solicitor—none of your city scribes, your east-end pettifoggers—but a regular four-in-hander, who did the business of the Guards; in money matters liberal as a prince, and in delicate ones, 'close as a pill-box;' in short, as my noble friend averred, he was 'the soul of honour.'

" It was late that day when I dropped into

Hanover-square, where the Marquis of —— was domiciled. The lamps were lighted in the streets and morning visiting over. I found Lady Agnes in the back drawing-room quite alone; she seemed unusually out of spirits, and I, as in duty bound, tenderly inquired the cause. She continued silent, sighed heavily, and I thought I saw a tear stealing down her cheek. I put my arm gently round her waist, and, Oh rapture! she leaned her head upon my bosom, and burst into a flood of tears. 'Agnes, my idolized Agnes! what is the matter? Speak to me—tell me what makes you so unhappy?'

"'Oh, Aylmer!' she murmured, 'pray don't ask it. I am foolish, very foolish, to permit my feelings to overpower me. But you, from whom I conceal nothing—no, I cannot go on. Don't ask it, dear, *dear* Aylmer!' and in the ardour of her entreaty, she turned her lips to mine, and so closely too, that they met by accident.

"All this, of course, required that I should tenderly and imperatively insist upon an explanation. At last, amidst sighs and sobs, the truth came out. Ebers had turned restive, insisted on a settlement of account, and posi-

tively refused Lady Agnes a box at the Opera, unless the subscription, a matter of some three hundred pounds, was promptly paid. "And has this paltry sum caused my Agnes a moment's pain?" Tears were the only answer, and tears, Jack, you will find are always forerunners of a kissing-match. I held her unresisting to my heart; told her how eternally her candour had obliged me; whispered that I would be with her soon, and hurried off from Hanover-square to procure the money, even were I to rob a church, or take to the road, and cry 'stand to a true man.'

"And where was money to be had? Where, but from the 'soul of honour,' the attorney. I flew to his house. In-doors he luckily was, but, most unluckily, out of cash entirely. He would, however, 'see about it immediately, and in a day or two'—'A day or two! Zounds! an hour was an age—the thing must be done instantly.' He thought a moment, put his hand across his forehead, rang the bell, called a coach, and though his dinner was ready, the kind man set off to make me happy.

"We traversed an endless extent of city, and reached at last a place eastward of all the world, denominated in 'Guides to London' St. Mary-axe, and known to antiquaries, Jews, Bow-street runners, and old clothesmen. There he presented me, after a private colloquy in the corner, to a small stout smooth-visaged gentleman, who, for my note at two months for five hundred pounds, favoured me with three hundred in bank-notes, four casks of dried cod, two ditto of train-oil, and two of turpentine,—I forget the brands, but they were excellent. I inquired what the plague I was to do with fish and oil? But 'the soul of honour' at once declared, that Isaac must sell those valuables on my account; and three days afterwards I received from Mr. Solomons, per solicitor, twenty-seven pounds, thirteen shillings, and twopence, being the balance of account on stock-fish, train-oil, and turpentine, agency and brokerage deducted. Mr. Solomons regretted that the assets were not more considerable—but whales had the last season been unusually abundant—turpentine was a drug—and every-

body knew that fish should be held over till Lent, and then it would realize a fortune.

"Now, from the hour I entered that sink of usury, my ruin was expedited, and I went to the dogs in double-quick. My horses were sold in execution for an accommodation bond, in which I had joined my noble friend; the coach-maker seized my carriages; the figurante made away with my plate and furniture in Bruton-street, and bolted to the Continent with a *ballet-master*. The tocsin of my distress sounded, and every harpy tradesman pounced on me like hawks upon a partridge. In this exigency, I applied to my noble friend, who had mysteriously disappeared. Through 'the soul of honour' he assured me that he could not show; and acquainted me that Lady Agnes had left town suddenly, to spend the holidays with a sick aunt. By the solicitor to the Guards he favoured me with a statement of account, and it there was clear and conclusive, that by a moiety of turf-losses, balance by play, &c. &c. I was indebted to my lord a cool fifty. In short, Jack, he had cleaned me out of about twelve thousand, and his amiable sister subsi-

dized me to the tune of three thousand more. No descendants from the Conqueror could have managed the thing better.

"My ruin was complete; my commission sold; I was betrayed by my favourite servant, after he had carried off my wardrobe; arrested, and taken to a west-end sponging-house. Then came to me the worthy solicitor, and the little gentleman of St. Mary-axe. My estates could not be sold, but they could be annuitized; and this was done so effectually, that they were totally alienated from me during the lives of the Jew, the attorney, and their wives; and on the fifth evening, I was turned out of the lock-up-house, with a free foot, the clothes upon my back, and some three pounds to commence the world with again.

"Where should I head? So totally duped and ruined was I, that I felt a miserable satisfaction in knowing that fortune had done her worst. I turned mechanically westward, to view the scene of my recent folly. On my way to Bruton-street, I passed through Hanover-square, and, wrapped in my cloak, from the opposite palisades indulged in a farewell look

at the mansion of my friend, the noble Marquis. Just then a carriage came round, and a female, full-dressed, descended the steps. I gazed, and by the clear lamp-light recognized 'the lady of my love,' going to an Oratorio at Drury-lane! Her visit to her sick aunt had been marvellously short! Off rolled the carriage, and I proceeded on my pilgrimage.

"I crossed Bond-street and stopped before my own house. It was dark as Erebus: not a light glimmered in hall or window, for it was untenanted and unfurnished. And there, one week ago, I had been master—there, night after night, I luxuriated in splendid dissipation—for me the glass sparkled—on me woman smiled—and mirth, and wit, and music, added their charms to the blandishments of beauty. Where were these now? Fled like a vision; the false one in another land; the friend, proven and found worthless; the host, a dupe, an outcast, and a beggar! I laughed bitterly; for everything I saw, reminded me I was ruined. The carriages that passed, the liveried menials that elbowed me, the soldiers that I met—all brought associations that maddened; I could

not breathe the very air in common with them, and rushing through the most obscure streets, never stopped, until I found myself close to the Tower.

"I entered a low tavern, but quitted it hastily, for it was a military house of call, and I might there meet those who would remember me. Going out, I jostled against a sergeant, and his exclamation was an Irish one: I spoke in return, and the native tongue, to which I had so often listened before I knew aught of man's villany, came 'like music' on my ear. The soldier told me he was going down next day to Gravesend, to embark with a detachment for his regiment on the Peninsula. I asked him, as we strolled along, to take a glass—we stepped into the Black Horse on Tower Hill—and Captain Aylmer, *quondam* of the Blues, was soon in close conversation with Sergeant O'Callaghan of the "Faugh-a-ballaghs," over half a pint of brandy in a pot-house—and well would it have been for Captain Aylmer that he had always kept as honest company.

"While thus engaged, the barmaid brought in

the evening-paper. I took it up, threw my eye carelessly over its columns, and there my name appeared most honourably recorded. I occupied no less than four paragraphs, all being extracted from morning contemporaries.

In the first, it was intimated, *with regret*, 'that a gallant captain, who last week retired somewhat suddenly from the Household Brigade, had exchanged his house in Bruton-street for apartments *in Banco Regis*."

"In the second, the editor gave a flat contradiction to 'a report that had crept into the Sunday prints, relative to an intended alliance between an ex-captain of the Blues, and a beautiful daughter of the house of Arlingford. What made this *on-dit* the more absurd was, that the Lady Agnes was shortly to bestow her hand upon Sir Peter Mackinnon, the celebrated Indian *millionaire*.'

"A third paragraph asserted, that the aforesaid Peter 'had amassed his immense wealth by speculations in opium, and not 'indigo,' as stated in the *Times* of yesterday.'

" But the fourth topped the business bravely.

In it there was no affected mystification; no dash or asterisks; for the worthy editor, like an honest man, spoke plainly out.

"'The recent break-down of Captain Aylmer of the Blues has occasioned a prodigious sensation in the different clubs. He is a defaulter, it is whispered, to the tune of sixty thousand pounds. The tribe of Judah, and certain west-end money-scriveners, are stated to be the principal sufferers. How the captain kept up appearances so long, seems extraordinary. We are sorry to say that the Earl of A—gf—d, who had procured for this unprincipled adventurer an *entrée* to the most fashionable circles, will be a very heavy loser. He had been unfortunately induced by the ex-captain, whose manners were exceedingly plausible, to join in some turf engagements. These proving unsuccessful, their discharge devolved upon the noble Earl, who, with that high and chivalrous spirit that distinguishes the house of Ar—gf—d, paid them most honourably. Captain Aylmer passed through Canterbury on Friday night, at fourteen minutes past eleven, in a chaise and

four ; and having by an hour and a quarter the start of his pursuers, there is little doubt but he has reached Boulogne, that *refugium peccatorum*, safely.'

" Was not this a brave finale, Jack ? Ruined ; left without home, profession, resources, or a second shirt ; stripped to my last guinea ; it was necessary to load me with abuse, and not only prove to the world that I was undone, but brand me as a knave and swindler ; while my titled plunderers not only escaped an *exposé*, but, by slandering their ruined dupe, built up their tottering reputations !

" Had I not already determined to fly from the scene of weakness in me and perfidy in others, this unblushing falsity of public opinion would have driven me to take this step. The sergeant appeared a providential agent to assist my plans. I proposed myself as a volunteer for the ' Connaught Rangers,' and right willingly my overture was accepted ; for seldom did so good a recruit offer himself. My purse contained some silver. I required, it is true, few necessaries ; but where were they to be had—

where the means to come from? I, who three months before, could present a peeress with an opera-box, wanted sufficient funds to purchase slop-clothing for the outfit of a private soldier.

"I thought, in this exigency, of the Jew. He lived hard by, and surely he would not refuse me a few pounds. Leaving my companion for a while, I hastened to the usurer's domicile. I reached the gloomy street, environed by lanes and alleys, the haunts of vice and villany. It was past seven on a Saturday; his sabbath was over, and lights glimmered in his den, and told that Isaac had resumed his secular employment of authorized and legal robbery. I entered his filthy hall, opened the side-door, and stood before the astonished Israelite, who was busily occupied in weighing old plate behind his counter; and, no doubt, the better part of it was stolen.

"Mechanically, he uncovered himself, placed his dingy hat upon a stool, and then with the same imperturbable attempt at silkiness, as if I were an unplucked victim, said, 'What may your commands be, Captain Aylmer?'

He spoke with some little hesitation, when he marked my kindling eye.

"'Good sir, my business is but small. I want money; a trifle will do.'

"'Why! captain—'

"'Pshaw! drop the title; you have among you un-captained me.'

"'Well, I thought you were in France, and safe from—'

"'Whom?' I exclaimed. 'Have I anything left worth robbing? No! you want a new man, Isaac!'

"'Nay, captain, I mean from the pursuit of sheriff's officers,' said the Jew.

"'Oh! bailiffs. Pray, what would they want with me? You, and your brother-plunderer the attorney, have had more than sufficient assets to pay the other harpies. You engaged to do so—at least it was in the bond—was it not, Isaac?'

"'Oh, yes certainly! But there were much monies due; and some creditors might not be merciful and wait!'

"'Fy, fy! Isaac! you libel them: they are all merciful men—indeed they are *very merci-*

ful! They have taken all — blood, marrow, vitals!—Phoo! the carcass is not worth the price of seizure! But the money.'

"'What money?' asked the Jew.

"'Ten pounds.'

"'As God will judge me! I have but one guinea in the house, and it is a light one!'

"'Isaac, thou liest!'

"He swore a deep Hebrew imprecation. I waxed desperate. A large ebony ruler lay upon the counter; and as I took it accidentally in my hand, the devil whispered that it would be a good deed to knock out the usurer's brains, and lessen the number of my annuitants. But suddenly the Jew's eye brightened as it caught the sparkle of a gem upon my finger. Strange enough, a ring of Pauline's, my late sultana, had required some repairs from the jeweller; been given me when passing the shop, and actually remained upon my finger unnoticed; such was the fever of my mind, that an expensive ornament was at my disposal, when I conceived my whole property lay within the narrow limits of my purse.

"'Is that a rose-diamond?' said the Israelite, in breathless anxiety.

"'Yes; I bought it as such.'

"'Will you part with it?'

"'Ay; if I met a man who had some money. You have none!'

"'I just remember that Mrs. Solomon's got a commission from a friend to buy her such an article. Permit me to examine it.'

"I looked at him. I had been so villanously robbed already, that I feared to confide my new-discovered treasure into the hands of the plunderer. 'If I trust it, will you not steal or change it?'

"'Bah! you are merry, captain,' said the Jew, with a grin.

"'Merry!' I gave a fiendish laugh. 'Ay, merry, I well may be. Take it—and by that prophet, your namesake, if you use aught of trickery with me now, I'll beat your brains out on the counter!'

"I pulled the ring off, he looked upon the jewel, then threw a look askance upon me, as the keeper steals a glance at a madman's eye.

"'What will you have for it?'

"'Thirty pounds.'

"'Bah! you jest: say half the money.'

"'No, Jew; I paid fifty for it a few months since.'

"'Say twenty.'

"'No.'

"'Twenty-five?'

"'By the beard of Aaron! I'll not part with it a sixpence under thirty.'

"'Well, well, wait a moment, I'll try if Mrs. S. could lend the money.'

"He rang a bell, and an old white-bearded Israelite answered it. To him he consigned the custody of the plate, disappeared behind a door concealed by a curtain, and in two minutes returned, counted down the money, rubbed the ring, spoke in Hebrew to his assistant, while I, without wasting a word upon the wretch, hurried off to join my companion.

"Well, Jack, we exchanged my clothes for others better suited to my altered estate; made some necessary purchases; retired to a double-bedded room; and next day, before the sun peeped through the dusky atmosphere of

London, the ex-captain of the Blues started for Gravesend, to join a detachment of the "Faugh-a-ballaghs."

"I will not detain you with a narrative of my Peninsular campaigns; I bore my fallen fortunes with as much philosophy as I could muster; *roughed it* pretty well, did my duty steadily, was wounded at Badajoz and Vittoria, and returned to England sergeant-major of the regiment, and master of some hundred dollars of pay saved. Through the interest of an old schoolfellow, I got a lieutenancy in the militia, and now you have my history.

"You may be curious about my London acquaintances, and wish to know how they got on and prospered. The lady shall have, of course, precedency. The fair descendant of the Conqueror actually married the *millionaire*, and there is not so miserable a wife within the bills of mortality. Sir Peter is a miser, and doles out grudgingly a pittance to his lady that a country-gentlewoman would reject. Her residence is an old mansion in the north, sometimes exchanged for a cheap lodging at Bath or Cheltenham, when the nabob is desired by his

physician to use the waters. Her equipage, an ill-appointed chariot — her retinue a grizzled negro, and one or two clowns from Cumberland. Rebel she dares not; for the old opium-dealer arranged the settlements so adroitly, that everything is discretionary with his good pleasure. He had previously become owner of so many securities of the Marquis, that the Arlingford estates were nearly at his mercy; and as he is a mean and sordid tyrant, he lords it over 'the noble house,' and makes them feel their painful dependency. No chance of an ameliorated life awaits the Lady Agnes, and from death alone can she hope emancipation from a thrall that goads her almost to madness; and yet she dares not leave or disobey a being whom she abominates. I hear his health is excellent: long may it continue so!—long may he be spared to curse the mercenary wretch—a perjurer before God's altar — a libel upon nobility—a by-word among women!

"As to the Earl her brother, he avoids a prison only by the privilege of a rotten borough. He, with some others of a lower caste, have been blasted for foul play. Fallen from his high and

palmy state, he exists upon the bounty of a pensioned mistress, to whom, if report speaks truly, he is privately married. In short, he is almost as low in reputation as any titled swindler in the kingdom.

"Jack, there is retribution even in this world. Of four annuitants, *three* are gone to their accounts—the attorney died by his own hand, to escape the penalty of a detected forgery. None stands between me and my inheritance but the Jew—and though villains of his kind are said to live for ever, I hope to see him planted yet, and sent to father Abraham after the remainder of the gang."

Aylmer stopped, for a hackney-chaise drove into the barrack-yard. We went to the window. Presently we saw Daly's servant tie on some luggage, and down came the gallant captain in mufti, and "the best of daughters" in a sky-blue pelisse. After handing in the lady, he deposited his own person in the vehicle; the driver chirruped, the horses obeyed, and off they went like a wedding.

"Victory!" exclaimed the cynic, as the carriage rattled over the paving-stones; "the

old lad," and he pointed to the floor, "to get his due, has stood your friend, Jack. Don't build on his assistance too far — he leaves gentlemen in the lurch, occasionally. But here comes dinner; bless your lucky planet, and sit down, 'with what appetite you may.'"

CHAPTER V.

JACK THE DEVIL.

Sir A.—You have been too lively, Jack.

Capt. A.—Nay, sir, upon my word——

Sir A.—Come, no lying, Jack; I'm sure 'twas so. Come, no excuses, Jack—why, your father, you rogue, was so before you.

The Rivals.

Events came thick upon each other. The Dalys had not departed above an hour, when the post came in, and "Ensign John Blake" appeared in the Gazette, promoted to a second lieutenancy in the 95th Rifles. My honest uncle had not forgotten me, and by exerting his county interest with Lord ——, obtained for me a removal to the line, and a commission in a favourite corps.

"I am truly gratified at this, my dear Jack,"

said Aylmer, "for I was going to counsel you to leave this regiment. It is as bad a school for a Connaught gentleman to spend his nonage in, as could be selected. You have seen a little of head-quarters; everything there irregular and disorderly—and dissipation the order of the day. The colonel sets the example; he can carry off more wine than any commander in the service, and of course his officers, like good soldiers, imitate their leader in all things. He is a singular personage, and although he and I are on but indifferent terms, I shall do him justice in my sketch. Brave as a lion—generous, if he had the means—mercenary, embarrassed, and extravagant—in short, a mass of contradictions. He has 'misused the King's press most damnably;' his fancy is to fill the regiment, not with 'revolted tapsters,' but tradesmen, whom drunkenness induces to list, and with these he is building a village on his property. The shifts to which his necessities urge him, are often mean, and sometimes most ridiculous. He raised a hundred last summer, by furnishing the officers with gold-headed canes, he, of course, collecting the amount from the corps; but when

the cane-maker will be paid, time will best tell. A screech-owl is not more unmusical; yet a short time ago, the commander discovered, what had escaped the observation of the master of the band, that every instrument was inharmonious—the horns were false; trumpets fit only for the driver of a stage-coach; bassoons flat; flutes not worth a fig; cymbals cracked; and the very bells upon the Turkish crescent "jangled out of tune." In short, every instrument was condemned, a new set provided by 'the maker to the Guards,' a subsidy of four hundred put in the colonel's pocket; for he *pouched* the band-fund, and the tradesman will be paid when the Greek kalends come round. The man is fearless; but even this good quality in the soldier is mischievous in him, from his propensity for duelling. Not long before you joined, a subaltern was dismissed for a gross deception in an exchange of horses. Now the colonel is nineteen stone, honest weight; but he cheerfully received a message from the delinquent, and *hipped* him next morning. The consequence was, that a fancy for fighting has crept into the corps, and there is a proneness

among the younger officers to take offence where none could be intended, that makes the mess anything but a safe society, wherein to get drunk or commence an argument.

"With regard to your friends below-stairs; I fear I shall be scarce forgiven, when I inform you, that you have let slip a golden opportunity. Indeed, Jack, you had the offer of a noble alliance, and rejected it. Miss Lucinda is Captain Daly's child by courtesy and law; but the noble Baron of Tireragh claims without dispute the honours of paternity. *Madame Mère* was daughter to his gate-keeper, found favour in his sight, and *Missy* was the result of the *liaison*. Captain Daly had the honour of receiving the lady's hand a few days before her accouchement, and thus became legally entitled to Miss Lucy. A company, a child, and a note for five hundred, rewarded the complaisance of the commander.

"Of Daly, little is known. None ever heard him mention the place of his nativity. Indeed, his profession in early life would have been equally involved in obscurity, had it not pleased his helpmate, in course of a connubial argument,

to hint that he had been a wig-maker. The captain is most unfortunate in his acquaintances; with the living he holds no intimacy; but the moment a man is fairly coffined, then the defunct turns out to have been his bosom friend.

"O'Moore is a true Bobadil; enacts the bully, and affects the madman. In everything appertaining to the safe keeping of his purse and person, he needs no control. His insanity is put on when required; one while it cloaks his cowardice, and at another, is a cover for his knavery.

"And, my dear Jack, was this a field for you to waste your youth in? *Here*, you would have learned jockeyship and duelling; sapped your constitution before it was matured; frittered your fortune away in drunkenness and debauchery; and for all this enjoy the honourable distinction of wearing a scarlet coat, wage war against illicit distillation, and, twice a year, mount a guard of honour upon the lodgings of a judge of assize.

"I shall not inquire how your account stands, between flirtation, and pounds, shillings, and pence; but I am certain you have come off

cheaper by half than your predecessor, Mr. D'Arcy. The pony was a present from that swain; the brown habit with black braiding is noted in his tailor's ledger; indeed, I suspect the greater proportion of the young lady's personals could be derived from the same source. And yet, poor man! he was no piquet-player; but applied for permission to marry, which his family answered by removing him by return of post.

"Jack, there are many Lucindas in the world. You have had an early lesson from Miss Daly, and an early lecture from a ruined man. Eschew fashionable profligates; no matter whether they have sprung from the servants' hall, or are booked by Debrett. Avoid play; it is covert robbery;—all, from the lottery at Guildhall, to the little-go in a beer-house. Gamblers, titled and untitled, are just the same; and you will be fleeced at the billiard-table of a baron, as unmercifully as you would be plundered in a Jermyn-street hell. Remember Frank Aylmer's warning; and, when Isaac Solomons is gathered to his fathers, I will visit you in per-

son, and learn how far you have profited by my counsels."

* * * * * * *

Events, indeed, came thickly. Napoleon had landed at Cannes, and in double-quick, was hurrying to the capital! I, with every officer on leave, was ordered to join; and as the ninety-fifth were at Brussels, I had not a moment to spare. The disposal of my regimental property was entrusted to Aylmer, my horse despatched to Castle Blake; and bidding adieu to the militia in a carouse, from which a corpulent captain never recovered, and which very nearly finished my own career, I started, on recovering, for the metropolis.

To visit Connaught was impossible; and all I could do was to see my cousin Jack pending the sailing of the packet. Accordingly, I threw myself into the Kells day-coach, and at seven o'clock in the same evening was safely landed at *The Hibernian*, in Dawson-street.

Having discussed my dinner speedily, my first care was to discover my loving kinsman. Jack was an intern disciple of the "Holy and

undivided Trinity;" and directed by the waiter, I set out for that abode of the Muses.

Although within fifty miles, Jack and I had not seen each other since we parted at Castle Blake; but we corresponded pretty regularly. My cousin, if his own account was true, was the most exemplary student that ever looked forward to the woolsack. Nothing indeed could surpass the sobriety of his life and morals; and, but that an occasional allusion was made in his letters to a Miss Letitia Lightbody, who, it appeared, was an ornament to her sex, and a pattern for milliners in general, I should not have been surprised to find that my friend had turned to his mother's faith, become a rigid Catholic, gave Father Roger's prophecy the lie, saved the county expense, the hangman some trouble, and died in the odour of sanctity, a second edition of St. Senanus—a gentleman canonized for celibacy by Mr. Thomas Moore—and where on such a point could a better authority be found?

It was past eight when I presented myself at the college-gate. Not being acquainted with the localities of the University, I addressed

one of some half-dozen lazy-looking, blue-coated functionaries, who were lounging on benches in the porter's lodge; there keeping watch and ward beside a rousing coal-fire. There was not a corporation in Christendom who would not have chosen them "for her own," they seemed so oily and over-fed. One of these "gorbellied knaves" waddled out to answer me; and from him I discovered, that there would be some difficulty in identifying my worthy kinsman, there being six gentlemen of the name of Blake then resident in this seat of learning.

"Come, sir," said he of the blue-coat, as he assumed a leather hunting-cap and lighted lantern; "we 'll make him out, never fear. I 'll describe them as we go along. Here, at N°. 2, ground-floor, left, lives one. They call him 'Dozey,' as he does nothing from Monday morning till Saturday night but sleep, drink beer, and set mousetraps."

"We won't disturb him, my friend; so pass by Dozey."

"Very well, sir," continued my guide. "N°. 9, garret, right—there lives another of them.

He is 'Bothered Blake;' deaf, dirty, and a premium man."

"Leave the dirty gentleman alone," said I.

"Just as you please," replied the polite porter. "Will you try 31, second, left? Him they have christened 'Bethesda Blake,' as he has got 'a call,' and lectures at prayer-meetings."

I shook my head.

"Then, there 's one in 27, lame of a leg—they call him 'Pop and carry one.'"

"The lame lad won't suit me."

"Egad! I am fairly puzzled," said my guide, "unless it 's 'Jack the Devil' you are looking for."

"That 's the man, for a thousand!"

"Oh, then, he lives hard by. This way, sir. He chums with 'Mad Hamilton,' and they hang out 16, Botany Bay, first-floor, right."

"I am so glad you 'll find him for me!"

"Find him!" ejaculated the fat functionary; "the Lord only knows where he is to be found at this hour! We 'll try the rooms: we may see *the skip*, or perhaps, by accident, the master. Come along."

Accordingly, we entered Botany Bay, and halted before a door, which bore in white Roman characters the names of "Mr. Blake" and "Mr. Hamilton." Knock we did manfully; "but none did come, though we did call for them."

"Ay, sir, they're out. Lord! they're the wildest gentlemen within the gates, and they're in trouble. Well, more's the pity. Last night they gave a cockle party—and cockle parties, sir, end badly, I have remarked. All drunk—went upon the batter—and left the Brick Square and Botany Bay without a lamp, good, bad, or indifferent. They are to be before the Board tomorrow; and if they escape expulsion, they're sure of being rusticated."

"Could you direct me where in town I shall have a chance of meeting Mr. Blake?" I inquired.

"Not I, faith! But now I remember, that Mr. O'Donel, one of the cockle party, came in just before yeerself: his rooms are in the next building, and we'll try if he knows."

Mounting two pairs of stairs accordingly,

Mr. O'Donel in person opened his door. I briefly explained my object, and apologized for disturbing him.

"No trouble whatever; step in, sir. Hinks, will you drive a nail?" and he pointed to a table, on which divers bottles were paraded. The guide without ceremony advanced and took a glass, which the host filled.

"Bad business, Mr. O'Donel; hang it! arn't there lamps enough outside without smashing those in college?"

"Who broke them?" inquired O'Donel. "I'm out of the scrape; I was regularly sewed up, and could not have put one leg before the other, if they had made me archbishop of Canterbury. I hear they stole your lanterns, and you were so drunk that you never missed them till morning!"

"Well, well, time will tell: good night, sir." I slipped a gratuity, and he disappeared.

When alone, I explained to Jack's companion the shortness of my halt in town, and how necessary it was to find his brother in iniquity with as little delay as possible. Promptly he

offered to assist my researches, premising that if he could not unkennel 'Jack the Devil,' then was all inquiry useless until to-morrow. "We have not a moment to lose, or I shall be shut in. We'll take Jack's regular beat, and, I have little doubt, unharbour him." Accordingly he tucked me under the arm, and off we set.

"Let me see—this is Lady Abbot's ball. Well, he won't be there, as he is out of temper. That is *nine* now striking; and probably, being in a sentimental mood, he will be taking tea with Miss Lightbody, the mantua-maker in Nassau-street. If we don't find him there, at *ten* we'll try the theatre—*Eleven*, the 'Silver Hell,' in Exchange-street—*Twelve*, he'll be at the 'House of Lords,' or picking a broiled bone at 'Nosey M'Keown's'—*One*, dancing at the 'Free-and-easy,' or singing in 'the Hole-in-the-Wall'—*Two*, we shall find him on the ramble—*Three*, we'll drop into St. Andrew's watch-house; and after that, for he's not to say a late sitter-up, we'll be pretty sure of catching him in bed taking his snooze at 'the Coal-Hole,' in Essex Street."

I thought of Father Roger: Kit Costello himself could not match Jack the Devil in the multiplicity of his unholy avocations.

We found Miss Letitia "at home," and were shown by an elderly assistant into a parlour behind the shop, where the lady was seated at a table covered with the shreds and patches of millinery litter. My introduction as Jack the Devil's kinsman procured me a most gracious reception: indeed, Miss Lightbody was pleased to compliment my appearance, which she compared with a portrait of Master Jack which ornamented her chimney-piece, and which she averred might pass for a likeness of myself. Whether my late *escapade* at country-quarters was too vivid in my recollection, and made me look with suspicion upon strangers, certainly I thought my cousin's description of this "ornament of her sex" rather overdrawn. She was a fine creature enough, but she "looked every inch" a mantua-maker. The style of her dress was much too florid for my fancy—and she exhibited an assortment of jewellery in rings, bracelets, and brooches, that was far too exuberant for a fastidious taste, and did not

add " to that majesty of virtue," of which article, according to Jack's epistles, she possessed a very extensive stock.

From this lady, O'Donel ascertained that the object of our researches had gone to keep an appointment at a coffee-house. Thither my guide piloted me, and there we discovered Jack the Devil in close conclave with a fashionable young man, who my companion informed me was assistant-surgeon of the 4th Dragoon Guards.

So occupied were my cousin and his friend with their business, that we established ourselves without being noticed, in the very next box to that in which they had ensconced themselves; and as we were only separated by a slight curtain, every syllable they spoke was overheard distinctly, and O'Donel winked, and signified that we should listen to their *tête-à-tête.*

" We shall be rusticated to a moral," said my relative with the evil surname. " The *skip* would swear an alibi, but they won't believe his oath. They know we had that infernal cockle party; and there was, unfortunately, nobody sufficiently drunk for mischief but our-

selves, except devils of good characters — men like Dozey Blake, who creep quietly to bed when they can sit upon their chairs no longer."

"Well, I think," said the surgeon, "a sick certificate will do—but the disease?"

"Consumption," said Jack the Devil, "I had a fourth cousin that died of it."

"It won't do"—said his counsellor; "they will expect you to drink milk, eat fish, and wear flannel."

"D—n fish and flannel!" replied the invalid. "What do you think of blood to the head?"

"Won't answer"—was the reply; "they would put you on the muzzle, interdict port, and prohibit fox-hunting. Come, I have it; you have overgrown your strength, require country air, gentle exercise, and a generous diet. Could you manage a short cough?" The doctor hemmed—the patient imitated it.

"Very good: try again—excellent; I have seen a man in pthisis that could not cough as well. What name shall I sign; are you particular about your physician?"

"Not very;" returned Jack the Devil; "the

surgeon-general bears a great name in Connaught."

"No better authority need be," said he of the Dragoons; "so here you go, honest Philip Crampton. Stop, I'll just add that you go down by easy stages, and are to avoid damp sheets and mental exertion, take exercise on horseback, &c. And now, where shall we toddle to? It is too late for the play, and too early for the "Hole-in-the-wall."

"Why, I promised, if possible, to sup with Letitia: so come with me. I must, you know, sleep in College, to go like a regular man before the Board to-morrow. I 'll just call at Hynes', and tell him to send in plovers and a grilled bone."

But our appearance changed these arrangements. Jack embraced me with delight; we all adjourned to "the Hibernian," supped merrily, and separated before midnight, as became a reformed militia-man and a sober student.

Next day Jack, with "Mad Hamilton" and a couple of north-country candidates for holy orders, were honoured by the provost and senior

fellows with a private interview, and then and there obtained a full permission to visit their respective relatives for a period of twelve calendar months.

We parted that evening, I to embark for Holyhead, and Jack to convey his sick certificate to Galway, and try how far native air would benefit an enfeebled constitution. Indeed it was marvellous with what apparent strength of lungs the patient cursed a passenger out of the box-seat—but in consumptive cases symptoms are wonderfully deceptive.

CHAPTER VI.

DRURY-LANE.—THE RAINBOW.

A mighty mass of brick, and stone, and shipping,
Dirty and dusky, but as wide as eye
Could reach, with here and there a sail just skipping
In sight, then lost amidst the forestry
Of masts; a wilderness of steeples peeping
On tiptoe, through their sea-coal canopy:
A huge, dun cupola like foolscap crown
On a fool's head—and there is London town!

Don Juan.

Fire and faggots, sir, if you are not Lord Foppington, who the devil are you?

Trip to Scarborough.

It was a lovely evening in the latter end of April, when I was set down from a Shrewsbury coach, at Hatchett's, in Piccadilly. Now, indeed, I was fairly launched upon the world: landed in the metropolis of Britain, master of my own

actions, with a full purse, a light heart, the benefit of a recent *escapade*, and of Aylmer's example. True, my time was limited to a few days, and in that brief space a military outfit must be completed. I did not dally; discussed my dinner "in double-quick;" set off to visit tailors and boot-makers, to whom I had been especially recommended; and having given necessary directions to these important functionaries, I called a coach, and was driven to Drury-lane Theatre.

I felt like a greyhound in a leash, dying to slip the couple, see life in London, and 'run riot' for the few short days allowed me. But I looked suspiciously around; Aylmer was before my eyes: here I was, and *here* he had been ruined. Forewarned by his experience, I determined to steer a clear course amid the dangers and temptations of the modern Babylon. Against the purse, rather than the person, hostile demonstrations were to be apprehended; and I therefore limited the contents of my pocket to a small sum for sights and coach-hire, with a ten-pound note as a '*corps*

de reserve,' should any exigency require a fresh supply.

Hackneyed as I am now in London spectacles, the night on which I entered the undress circle of Drury-lane will never pass from my memory.

The second act of a very splendid melodrame had commenced. The matchless singing of Braham and Stephens, then in their zenith; the scenic beauty of the stage; the action of the pantomime; the splendour of the processions; the dancing of the *corps de ballet*—were to me perfectly fascinating; and till the curtain fell, I was rapt in wonder and delight, and never took my eyes from the business of the drama for a moment. Nor with the conclusion of the play did my astonishment terminate; the house was fashionably crowded, and the dress-circle presented a blaze of beauty — a galaxy of "sparkling eyes," on which I thought I could have gazed for ever!

"You are a stranger to the London stage," said a gentleman, to whom during the course of the performance I had frequently applied for

information, which with great politeness he supplied.

"I am not only to the stage, but to the town, for I arrived from Ireland but this evening."

"Indeed!" replied the stranger; "is not this piece most interesting? It is one of the most delightful dramas I ever witnessed. The scenery so beautiful, the illusion so perfect, that it looks reality. If to me, to whom the stage for years has been familiar, it appears so, how much more forcibly must it strike one who for the first time has entered a London theatre?"

Of course, I could not but express my admiration warmly.

"You have much to see in this mighty capital," continued the stranger; "and at your years, young gentleman, objects of curiosity are sought after with avidity. You have, no doubt, some cicerone, some friend, to use the common *parlance* of the world, 'to show the lions.'"

"No, sir," I replied, "I am alone in the metropolis. My visit is a hurried one, for in

three days I leave London for the Continent, to join my regiment at Brussels."

"Then will you pardon me?" said my companion, "I am about to take a liberty; it is, however, kindly meant, and I trust it will be as kindly received. Let me entreat you to be cautious; look on every woman with distrust, on every stranger with suspicion. Recollect the myriad of dangers to which youth, in this overgrown city, is exposed. All that can excite the fancy and the passions will be lavishly presented. Vice and villany here are masked under the most flattering appearances; knavery assumes the garb of fashion; and, believe me, much experience, and far more prudence and self-control than fall commonly to the lot of one so young, will be required to protect you from the dangerous and besetting allurements of this splendid and most profligate metropolis."

I felt the kindness of the unknown. He spoke with the warmth of a parent, the wisdom of a philosopher—and his words were the very echo of Aylmer's parting admonition. I looked

at the stranger; he was scarcely past the meridian of life, plain and grave, but gentlemanly in his dress. He might, from external appearances, have been a parson, a physician, a professor. My guess was wrong: before we parted he obliged me with his card, and on it was engraven, "Lieut.-colonel Edwards, 4th Dragoon Guards, 8, Portman-square."

Need I say, that I expressed my gratitude to the gallant colonel warmly? I told him, however, that I had been duly prepared for a *début* upon town; mentioned my friend Aylmer, and assured him that his advice was treasured, and his misfortunes had left a permanent impression on my memory.

"You were indeed fortunate, my young friend, in coming here fortified with good counsel, and better still, a firm resolution to profit by it. But the bell rings, and now for the farce."

During the remainder of the entertainment, I felt how particularly fortunate I had been in making the acquaintance I had done. The colonel knew everything and everybody; he

was a moralist; but he was a man of the world; pointed out peers and peeresses in the private boxes, and Jews, bankers, and stock-brokers in the dress-circle; showed me the performers, and favoured me with their biographies; named the chief actresses, and obliged me with a list of their keepers, past and present: in truth, as Ophelia says, "he was good as a chorus."

The curtain dropped. The colonel apologized for not bringing me home, but his lady was an invalid; and, though it was not "his wont," he hinted that we might have some supper at a tavern. The proposition was delightful; I willingly consented, and we left the theatre arm-in-arm. My Mentor proposed a quiet house in Covent Garden. Off we set; and when under the piazzas encountered two gentlemen, who recognised my gallant friend.

"Ha! Bill! How goes it, my tight 'un? Anything alive, old boy?"

"What a rattle you are, Jack!—Friend of mine—Mr. Blake, 95th—Lord John Rumble, Sir Francis Bramble;" and in due form, I, a

poor lieutenant of Rifles, was presented to these specimens of the English aristocracy.

"Will you join us?" said Colonel Edwards, "we are going to have an oyster or broiled bone quietly at 'The Rainbow.'"

"The Rainbow be d—— !" said Lord John: "come, go it, Bill; I say 'The Finish !'"

But my companion sturdily dissented. "No, my lord. This gentleman," pointing to me, "has never been in London till this evening, and I will never consent to introduce him to a place where the most profligate of both sexes congregate."

"Now, away with this gammon !" rejoined the baronet, "I hate 'The Rainbow !' Come, toddle to the Saloon; that 's a slap-up thing ! and we 'll look in for an hour."

But the colonel was immovable; and Lord John and his companion good-naturedly consented to yield for once, and promised to rejoin us without delay.

There was a *brusquerie* in the manners of both the colonel's friends—a total absence of everything aristocratic, that astounded me,

That men of high family should use language decidedly vulgar, and partially unintelligible, was astonishing. Sir Francis was a married man—none in Britain stood higher in public estimation; and would he venture to figure at "The Finish!" I was certainly surprised, and I expressed it to the colonel; of course, with due caution.

He sighed heavily. "Indeed, my young friend, your remarks are just and natural. In the upper classes of society, a consciousness of high station, and the prevailing fashion of the day, have produced an ease of manner bordering upon vulgarity. The coach-box is tenanted by the owner, while the driver sits within. Boxers are the familiar favourites of the nobility. The ring, the stable, and the race-course, are the only schools now; and even senators affect the slang of a society, that it is surprising by what contingency they could have ever known.—But here we are;" and as he spoke, we entered a very unpretending coffee-room, and seated ourselves in the most retired box, while the colonel pulled the bell, and ordered supper directly.

"My friends," said the polite commander, "will be here immediately, and I must give you a hint, which I know you will excuse. Persons like Sir Francis and Lord John, when on rambles like the present, sink their titles. They fancy they are unknown;" and the colonel smiled at the absurdity; "but we must gratify this folly, and address them simply by their surnames. We will fall into their humour; although, between you and me, the waiter will certainly detect them; and, before we part, penetrate their incognito; ay, and know them as well as you or I."

Almost immediately the friends of Colonel Edwards joined us. I looked at Lord John. He was a common-place sort of personage, in no way remarkable, but for an immense display of rings, chains, and brooches. "Ay," thought I, "there is the overweening wealth of the English nobility. Still something shows the man." I turned to Sir Francis; and he, indeed, surprised me. He was ungraceful, yeoman-looking. I whispered my disappointment touching his friends to the co-

lonel, while our companions were otherwise employed; but he assured me, that nothing was more likely to lead to a wrong notion of men, than to be influenced by mere manner.

Indeed, notwithstanding his kindness to me, I felt that Sir Francis had sunk immeasurably in my estimation; and I lamented that he should bow to fashion's ordinances, and for a moment descend from his high and palmy state to join in vulgar conviviality. Aylmer had torn away much of the tinsel from high life, but for this *exposé* I was unprepared; and, with disgust, I admitted how faithful the picture of my ruined friend had been, when he described the littleness of nobility. Upon Lord John I looked with pity; he was young, just starting into life, and might reform; but, upon my soul! I regarded Sir Francis with feelings bordering on contempt.

Supper ended, the colonel reminded his friends that there was that night a ballot at Brookes's, at which they were expected to be present. Accordingly, a bill was called for, and I, finding my stock of silver almost exhausted, produced

my ten-pound note. The colonel was similarly circumstanced; and when the waiter answered the bell, he handed him a bank-note for change, and returned mine, peremptorily declaring that on this occasion he must be paymaster. I remonstrated to no purpose; he obliged me to pocket my purse, and all I could effect was a compromise, by which it was stipulated, that, on the following night, I should accompany the party to Covent Garden Theatre, and play the host afterwards if I pleased.

A coach was called; we embarked; I was set down at Hatchett's, and my companions proceeded to their club.

Here I was, safe and sound in purse and person, my first night in London over! Was I not, indeed, a fortunate fellow, to form so desirable an acquaintance as Colonel Edwards? I had promised to dine with him next day; and he had assured me that he would call early at Hatchett's, and drive me in his curricle to Greenwood and Cox's. I went to bed; slept soundly; dreamed of dukes, duchesses, countesses, and colonels. There was but one alloy to my happiness, and that was, that my visit was so limited.

I had just finished breakfast and a hasty perusal of the morning papers, when some trifling articles that I had purchased on the preceding evening in a linen-draper's shop in Bond-street, were sent home. I called the waiter, asked him for change to pay the messenger, and handed him my ten-pound note. He looked at it, and then, as I thought, very suspiciously at me.

"Why this is quite a new one," said he.

"A what?"

"A new one, sir."

"New or old, I presume it's a good one."

"One of the best of the kind I ever saw," replied the waiter.

"Its kind! Why, is it not the Bank of England?"

"No, sir; it's the Bank of Elegance," quoth the attendant.

"Bank of the Devil! What do you mean?"

The waiter bowed, and handed me the note. It was, indeed, what is termed a flash one, being the undertaking of a wig-maker in Bishopsgate-street "to cut hair against any man living, or pay bearer, on demand, at the Bank of

Elegance, Fifty Pounds." Dark doubts crossed my mind — Edwards was a swindler, and had exchanged this for my ten-pound note when settling the supper-bill at the Rainbow. At that moment a twopenny-post letter arrived; it was addressed to me by the gallant colonel, and put the point at rest.

"My dear Blake,

"You have very probably discovered before now that you are one of the greatest asses in existence."—Very true, but not very flattering. —"Certainly, your friend Aylmer may be proud of his pupil."—I groaned.—"Even my warnings were unheeded, and you let me do you out of ten pounds, and palm upon you, for a couple of the *noblesse*, two as vulgar scoundrels as ever prigged a pocket-handkerchief. You are one of the softest young gentlemen I have had the honour of cleaning out for a long time; therefore, as your stay is limited, don't wait for me to introduce you to Craig's-court; for if you stop at Hatchett's till my curricle arrives, you had better replenish your purse, and obtain an extended leave of absence.

"I beg you not to *debit* me with your gloves,

knife, and handkerchief."—Gone they were indeed.—" Lord John grabbed them. You will be sorry to learn that the poor baronet is in quod: he is very unlucky, as it is scarcely a fortnight since he returned from transportation. He made an awkward effort at a watch, and is now under the screw, and I fear, will go for change of air to Brixton.

" Adieu! my friend. Mention me to Mr. Aylmer when you write to him; and if you profit by my precepts, you will have laid out ten pounds to excellent advantage. Although I could accommodate you with a score of names, I think last night's will do as well as any. Thine, my dear Blake, very affectionately,

" William Edwards,
" *Lieut.-Col. 4th Dragoon Guards.*

" P.S. Was it Portman or Berkeley Square where my town-residence was? Faith, I forget which; but I leave the choice to you. Mrs. E. desires her regards.

" W. E."

" Tuesday morning, 8 o'clock."

" To John Blake, Esq., 95th Rifles,
Hatchett's Hotel, Piccadilly."

I folded the colonel's epistle, and laid it aside most carefully; unlocked my portfolio, and gave the waiter a bank-note; and having called a coach, drove off to call upon Greenwood and Cox.

CHAPTER VII.

A PROMISED HEIR—CALL AT BAKER-STREET—DEPARTURE.

Sir Anthony. — You must make his peace, Mrs. Malaprop;—you must tell her 'tis Jack's way — tell her 'tis all our ways—it runs in the blood of the family! Come away, Jack, ha, ha, ha! Mrs. Malaprop — a young villain!

Mrs. M.—Oh, Sir Anthony!—O fie, captain!

The Rivals.

I REACHED Craig's-court as safely, though not so stylishly, as if I had come in the colonel's curricle; despatched my business, and found myself—no bad thing for a second lieutenant—in strong credit with the agents. Sundry letters were handed to me, and among others, a most voluminous epistle from my uncle Manus. Now, Manus Blake was but an indifferent penman, and to him a letter was a labour. His correspondence rarely exceeded two

or three despatches within a twelvemonth, and therefore, an epistle from him must be momentous. I ordered the coachman to drive me back to Hatchett's, that there I might have full leisure to peruse this important document.

"Castle Blake, April 1815.

"Dear Jack,

"Since you sailed for England, I have received a letter from your grandfather, in reply to one of mine, relative to your poor mother's fortune. I thought, now that you had entered into a profession, it was full time to inquire what disposition had been made of five thousand pounds which I understood to have been a legacy from an aunt to my late sister-in-law, and over which Mr. Harrison had no control. Hitherto I forbore to make inquiries, lest it might be imagined that I wished to appropriate any part of your scanty patrimony to your past or present necessities. Mr. H. informs me, and in more polite terms than I expected from him, that you were made a ward of Chancery, and the money has been accumulating for your benefit. This is all right. As your grandfather is at present in London, although he expressed

no wish to see you in his letter, I would recommend you to call; maybe the Lord would soften his heart, and make him do justice to one that never injured him, and that 's yourself. He lives at N°. 43, Upper Barker or Baker Street.

" You will expect, no doubt, to hear the news of the neighbourhood. Mrs. Donovan has married a colonel somebody, and, we suspect, made but a poor hand of it—(more of that to her! say I,)—for they seem to be hard-up for money, or they would never rack the tenants as they 're doing.

" Father Roger has got the parish of Ballyboffin. The people were sadly neglected by the old priest, who was bedridden for years. Father Roger has turned over a new leaf with them, and the first Sunday he cursed them out of the face, with bell, book, and candle, to show them that they must look to their souls in future.

" Tony, poor man! broke his leg last Tuesday, by a fall from the switch-tailed mare. It was a great blessing, when he was to break a bone, that it happened the end of the season.

" A set of Ballybooley boys, the other night, took off Sibby M'Clintock, the schoolmaster's

daughter. There is a great hullybaloo in consequence, but no tidings of her yet. I 'm glad she 's gone, for your cousin Jack was eternally dropping in. It 's not right to put temptation in a young man's way; and as he 's in delicate health, his mother won't allow him to be contradicted in anything.

" I fear he will be obliged to give up the bar entirely, which is a great pity, for he would have cut a figure. He over-read himself so much in college, that the sight of a Latin book gives him a head-ache. He had a nasty short cough when he came down, but it is leaving him fast; and he tallied the fox we found in Carrintubber, last Friday, as clear as a bell: his lungs, therefore, are not affected, which is a great comfort, although the surgeon-general was a little apprehensive about them at one time.

" Denis Corcoran burned powder for the first time, last week, in a field near Ballinasloe. It is allowed on all hands that he behaved prettily, and hit his man the second shot. One is interested naturally for a friend's child, and indeed, I always thought that Denis was a promising boy.

" Your aunt is pretty well, and preparing for the jubilee.* She misses Father Roger much, for he was of great service to her in private. He is looking out for a smart coadjutor to serve the parish, and then he will return, as usual, to manage your aunt's concerns in Castle Blake.

" Poor Darby Moran — and a decent boy he was—him you may remember that they called 'Darby Dhu' (black), was hanged last Monday for shooting at a peeler.† It was hard enough upon him, as he only lamed the fellow for life. As he was a tenant's son, your aunt, out of respect, sent the maids upon the jaunting-car to attend the execution. He died real game, and pleased the priest greatly in religion before he came out upon the drop. We gave him a good wake and a fine funeral.

" Dr. Stringer was fired at, in mistake, when leaving Mount Kirwan after dinner: they shot his horse dead; and when they discovered that he was the wrong man, made him an ample apology. They took him, in the dark,

* A religious festival held in Ireland at stated times, for making of marriages and remission of sins.

† *Anglice*, a policeman.

for Parson Milligan, as he rode a grey cob, and had on a black cotamore.*

"Your aunt is very uneasy at your being ordered abroad, and fears some accident will happen, as she has had bad dreams. Indeed, my dear Jack, you must look sharp. Foreign parts, they say, are dangerous. I wish to God you were in a quiet safe country like Galway; but we can't have everything as we want it.

"I have written this post to my old friend Mortimer, and desired him to give you a case of his best pistols, and send the bill to me. I would recommend you to have them saw-handled, with a finger-crook upon the trigger-guard, for it steadies the hand wonderfully. Be sure you choose a small bore and a weighty barrel. I would have sent you my own, but your cousin is growing up. He will soon be on the grand jury, and some devil will be apt to plaister a quarrel on him; or somebody might tramp on my own corns; so it is better for us to keep the tools we are accustomed to.

"Father Roger is breaking fast, and you 'll

* *Anglice*, a great-coat.

be sorry to hear it. You remember what a head he had. Two bottles of port now make him talk thick, and the third smothers him totally. More's the pity! a better Christian never cursed a flock; and, as a companion—one might drink with him in the dark, and ask no questions!

"Denis O'Brien sends his blessing, and desires me to say that he is rearing two pups of the tanned setter. And with mine, your aunt's, and your cousin's love, believe me,

"Dear Jack,

"Ever your affectionate uncle,

"Manus Blake."

"P.S. A letter by some mistake came here, directed to you, from a Miss Lightbody of Dublin; and, unfortunately, it fell into your aunt's hands. The best of the sex are curious, and she read it every word. Indeed, poor woman! she's over-religious, and of course, was greatly distressed. I told her, young men would be young men to the end of the chapter. You know, Jack, I am not too tight-laced, but the less you have to do with such gentlewomen the better. It appears by her account, that

I am likely to become a grand-uncle. Well, it can't be helped; and you may make your mind easy, for your little one shall be protected. I directed your cousin Jack to write to the lady; it will come better from him, and I 'll pretend to know nothing of the thing. But take my advice, and avoid such scrapes in future. Jack tells me he thinks he saw her once, and that she is very good-looking. Don't take any notice of this when writing to your aunt, for she is to know nothing of the business.

"It seems also, by Miss Lightbody's epistle, that they have nick-named you 'Jack the Devil.' I suspect this appellation was earned by many a wild prank. My Jack, it would appear, was termed *Sober-sides;* but, as I tell his mother, had his health been as good as your's, he might have been as wild as yourself.

"Your's, M. B."

"N.B. As you may be out of the country, if it is a boy, I 'll have it called after your poor father; but if a girl, I think it should be named after your aunt. She 'll expect the compliment; and, indeed, from her affection towards you, she deserves it."

Was there ever such consummate assurance as my worthy cousin's? To transfer to me not only his flattering *sobriquet*, but the honours of paternity that awaited him! And yet, I could not but laugh at the simplicity of my uncle, whom it was evident that Jack had duped egregiously. I felt half inclined to undeceive him. If it answered no other purpose, it might alter the patronymic of the expected heir. But, as my aunt was preparing for the jubilee, a discovery of Jack's iniquities might interrupt the holy tranquillity of her mind, so very requisite at this important period, when sins were lopped off by the dozen, and an immunity granted to all good Catholics to commence a new score.

Young as I was, I saw the necessity of attending to my uncle's advice, and calling upon my grandfather. I prepared for the interview, and drove off to Baker-street. The coach stopped at the right number; and for once in his life, Manus Blake was correct in figures. The coachman knocked, the door opened, the steps fell, I jumped from the vehicle, and to a very pretty-looking woman verging upon the

middle-age, I handed my card. She read it, placed her hands across her eyes, examined my features for a moment, and then, with a half scream, closed the hall-door, and requested me to follow her. She led the way into a front drawing-room, very expensively furnished, and, by the presence of a harp, piano, and guitar, bearing evidence of female occupation.

"Gracious God! how like his father!" was her first remark; "I wish, boy, you had been liker your mother; it would have served you better."

I was astonished.

"Why did you not call yesterday?" she continued; "your grandfather and Miss Emily left town this morning, on a short excursion; and from the old gentleman's declining health, God knows how soon he may go off!—Ay, the same eyes, same hair, same look, and, I fear, the same recklessness—all—all like his father. You must follow them, sir. They will reach Brighton on Monday; there you must meet them."

I stared at her. "You seem to know me, and to have known my parents!"

"Yes," she replied, "I knew and loved them—I mean your mother. Alas! I was the chief cause of that disastrous union; for I assisted your gallant but imprudent father to carry off Miss Harrison. Is there a servant of the colonel's living? his name O'Brien?"

"Denis O'Brien is stout and hearty."

"Does he ever speak of his master?" said the female.

"Eternally," I answered.

"Does he ever mention the innkeeper's daughter? she who assisted in that wild adventure. Names he a person called Phœbe?"

"Indeed he does: or, as he terms it, '*Phaybay.*'"

She laughed. "Ay, just so; I think now I listen to his 'Phaybay, jewel.' And what do they call you? Cæsar, I suppose."

"No, I am, unfortunately, called after my grandfather—John."

"Unfortunately! I am glad of it," she said; "my heart bounded when you alighted from the coach; and, but your years are fewer, I could have fancied it was the poor colonel on the well-remembered night he stopped at

the Red Lion in Stainsbury. You will go to Brighton, won't you ?"

"Impossible ! I leave town to-morrow ; my regiment is in the Netherlands, and my leave expired."

"Alas ! like your father in everything ! And you are a soldier, too. How determined fortune seems to part you from your natural protector! You must write to Mr. Harrison, however. At times his heart softens when he thinks of Miss Ellen's hapless fate. There is her portrait," and she pointed to a half-length painting covered with a silken curtain ; "it is kept veiled as you see ; but, in secret, your grandfather draws the silk aside, and looks at it for hours. I have ascertained this frequently."

As she spoke, she jumped upon a chair, and uncovered my mother's portrait. It was the likeness of a beautiful girl in the very dawning of womanhood. I gazed on it with deep interest. There was uncommon loveliness in the features, whose character was a softness touching upon melancholy. I became sensibly affected; tears stole down my cheeks; I heard

sobs beside me, and on turning round saw Phœbe weeping bitterly. I took her hand and placed her on the sofa. "Come, Phœbe, this is foolish in us both; tell me who Miss Emily is?"

My mother's confidante wiped away her tears with the corner of her apron.

"And do you ask this question? Are you so ignorant of your grandfather as not to know that she is his adopted child, his intended heiress? But, as all correspondence has ceased for years, I suppose you are a stranger to all this. Well, I need not tell you how severely your mother's marriage wounded her father's pride, and how bitterly he resented it. While writhing under what he called a child's desertion, chance made him acquainted with a very amiable lady of good family in Gloucestershire. He addressed and married her; in due time she gave promise of an heir, and her husband was overjoyed. But this happiness was brief; news of the tragic fate of Colonel Blake, and the untimely death of his lovely wife, stung Mr. Harrison to the soul. In secret, he felt his own cruelty to the deceased, and longed for

some opening that would allow him to offer his protection to the orphan grandchild. At last he conquered his own pride, and wrote to your uncle; and instead of a pacific reply, received a letter offensive in its language, and ending with a challenge."

I started—"Was ever such madness? a challenge!"

"Yes, indeed; madness you may well call it. Of course, with that letter all communication between the parties ceased.

"Meanwhile Mrs. Harrison's accouchement was approaching, and a house was engaged in town, that she might be placed under the immediate care of the first physicians. The hour came—her husband's hopes were blasted—she died in giving birth to a still-born babe!

"The deceased lady had an only sister, who had lost her husband, a captain in the navy, a few months before. As Mrs. Clifden's confinement drew near, Mrs. Harrison, who was deeply attached to her widowed sister, invited her to Stainsbury Park. There she gave birth to a girl, but never herself recovered. It was believed that this circumstance had preyed

upon Mrs. Harrison heavily, and in a great degree produced her death. She thought and spoke of Mrs. Clifden incessantly; adopted her child—and, when dying, confided it to your grandfather's protection, after receiving a solemn assurance that he would be a parent to the orphan. That promise Mr. Harrison rigidly fulfilled. The child was brought home—he watched her from the cradle—gradually he grew more and more attached to the deserted infant, and the little Emily became to him a cherished pledge—a darling daughter. She is now nearly sixteen, beautiful as innocent. But you shall judge for yourself; and Phœbe led me to the mantelpiece, over which a miniature of Miss Clifden was suspended. It was the likeness of a very lovely girl; the expression of the countenance combining sweetness with intelligence.

"Indeed, Phœbe," I said, "this is a charming picture. Has not the artist flattered Miss Clifden?"

"Far from it. More beautiful faces than her's I have certainly seen, but I never saw one that interests so much. That miniature was

painted when Miss Emily was a year younger; she is of course more womanly now, but still the likeness is most striking."

"And is this fair girl as accomplished as she is pretty, Phœbe?"

"Her teachers say so," she replied. "These are her drawings;" and she opened a portfolio, containing many very elegant pencil sketches. "She plays delightfully, and she has been taught to dance by the first artist at the Opera. But this accomplishment she has never practised but with her master; for Mr. Harrison's health and habits preclude her from entering into society, even were she old enough to go out. In truth, there is not a girl in England more secluded."

"I wish I had seen her."

"I wish sincerely that you had," said Phœbe. "But where would be the advantage? yet, when you are some years older, I would give this hand to see you and Miss Emily married."

I laughed. "Why, Phœbe, I thought you had had enough of match-making."

"H-eighho! I have been an unlucky agent to others, and most unfortunate in my own

union," and she pointed to a wedding and a mourning ring upon her fingers.

"Then you have been married, Phœbe?"

"Yes," she replied, "I suppose it was the evil influence of example; for soon after your father eloped with Miss Harrison, I took it into my head to run away with a sergeant of dragoons. He was a handsome, good-humoured fellow, and I an only child. My mother purchased his discharge—in due time we were forgiven and brought home—and in three years, Jenkins, by the death of my parents, became owner of the inn. His habits were indolent and jovial; and when all control was removed, they unfortunately became dissipated. I strove to reclaim him, and kept our property together pretty well, until, in an hour of inebriety, he was mad enough to become security for an insolvent tradesman; and before I even apprehended danger, we were utterly ruined, and the earnings of my father's life swept away to discharge the debts of a rogue. He saw his folly when too late to remedy it, and died, poor fellow! a broken-hearted man. I, being fortunately without incumbrance, was

taken into Mr. Harrison's household. There I have remained since, and there I am likely to continue."

"No," said I, "not if your quondam admirer Mr. O'Brien knew that his 'Phaybay darlin' was disengaged."

She smiled, and rallied me again about Miss Clifden. "Well, Phœbe, when the wars are over, I will come here and make my suit. Will you assist me?"

"Indeed I will," she replied with a smile.

"Give me, then, that picture, that I may know my Dulcinea, should I by any chance meet her."

She shook her head. "I dare not. But come, you shall have a token of my pretty mistress," and, opening a pocket-book, she gave me a ringlet of auburn hair.

"I got it from Miss Emily the night before she left, and little did she know that I should so soon transfer her favour to another. But she speaks of you often, calls you cousin, and wonders if you are as handsome as I describe the poor colonel to have been."

"Well, well, Phœbe, you will make a favourable report. I leave town in the mail

to-morrow evening for embarkation, but I 'll visit you in the forenoon."

"You will find me at home; though, faith, young gentleman, I risk my reputation by admitting so gay a gallant in the absence of the family;" and, with a woman's vanity, she arranged a stray side-curl in the chimney-glass. When parting in the hall, of course I kissed my mother's confidante. "Now deuce take you for a saucy boy. But it is hard to blame him; the fault is a family one. His poor father never commenced or concluded a conversation without committing a similar impertinence!"

I made my peace next day with Phœbe; and some small memorials of my mother that I forced her to accept, with a few trifles from myself, cemented our friendship. We parted—she in tears, and I more affected than I shall now acknowledge; for Phœbe appeared the only connecting link remaining between my lamented parents and myself.

On the third evening I left London, had a fine passage to Ostend, and reached headquarters at Brussels on the 23rd of April.

I need only say that the probationary course

of drill was speedily got over; letters of introduction procured me attention from the commanding officers, and I made some very desirable private acquaintances in my own corps. I took lessons in French and fencing—purchased a horse—rode about the city and immediate neighbourhood—found Brussels a delightful residence for a young soldier—and while days rose big with the fate of empires, mine slipped lightly away, and the middle of June found me entirely engrossed in learning the rudiments of love, war, and the German flute.

CHAPTER VIII.

QUATRE-BRAS AND WATERLOO.

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,
Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay,
The midnight brought the signal sound of strife,
The morn the marshalling in arms,—the day
Battle's magnificently-stern array!
The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which when rent,
The earth is covered thick with other clay,
Which her own clay shall cover, heaped and pent,
Rider and horse,—friend, foe,—in one red burial blent.

Childe Harold.

On Thursday, the 15th of June, the sun rose gaily on fair Brussels. Without, war was on the wing—within, there was joy and festivity; and yet, strange contrast! some were preparing for the field, while others were dressing for the ball-room. Courier after courier brought vague reports of hostile demonstrations on the frontier. Blucher was in constant communication with Wellington, and all were ready for march-

ing at a moment's notice, so soon as Napoleon developed his plans sufficiently, to show us upon what point the storm of battle would descend.

In the evening, the Prince of Orange reached the gay city, and rode into the Duke's courtyard, and he bore certain tidings of Bonaparte's advance. The Prussian general, Muffling, soon after confirmed the news; and Picton, who had but that morning arrived from England, remained with his military colleagues, discussing over their wine at the Duke's table the probable opening of a campaign, whose close, short as it was, he was not fated to witness.

Night came—

> "And Belgium's capital had gathered there,
> Her beauty and her chivalry."

Surrounded by a brilliant circle at the Duchess of Richmond's ball, Wellington received a second despatch from Blucher. The moment for action was come, and the intelligence was decisive. Napoleon had crossed the Sambre in force, and was marching rapidly on Charleroi and Fleurus.

While reading the Marshal's communication,

the English commander became wholly absorbed in thought, and his air was grave and contemplative. As if forgetful that he was in a crowded room, he muttered some sentences, in which Blucher's name was audible. Then, with characteristic rapidity, his resolution was formed, his orders quietly issued to his staff, and again he joined the gay group with whom he had been engaged when the momentous intelligence of Bonaparte's advance was delivered.

While orders were hastily despatched, directing the British brigades to break up from their respective cantonments, and advance by rapid marches upon Nivelles, the *corps-d'armée* in Brussels was ordered to march by the Wood of Soignes, upon the great road to Charleroi. Thus it was intended, that the whole force should unite as it approximated to the scene of action, while the Belgian capital should be covered from any effort of Napoleon, and the communication with the Prussians maintained, by the English left forming a junction with Blucher's right.

It was a moment of painful and engrossing interest, when the "turn out" of the bugle

was returned by the rolling of the "beat to arms." The great city was buried in repose. The soldier was sleeping in his quarters—the burgher dreaming of to-morrow's business—while in that gay crowd where he who was to direct the storm of war still lingered, "an hundred hearts beat happily," that before another sun would set, were doomed to mourn over friendships dissolved by death, and faery visions of love's formation, alas! too bright and beautiful to be realised.

I was asleep—but the excitement and uncertainty of the last evening had rendered mine but uneasy slumbers, and I was teazed with irritating dreams. One while, I was about to fight O'Moore across the mess-table—at another, mother Daly upbraided me with broken vows, and brandished in her hand an attorney's letter, in which the pains and penalties of breach of promise were awfully denounced. Again, with the inconsistency of a dreamer, I found myself before the Old Bailey, to witness the execution of my friend Sir Francis, for street robbery; and, while waiting for the baronet's last appearance upon any stage, I felt a pluck at my watch-

chain, and detected Lord John in the very act of borrowing my repeater. I was lustily shouting for an officer, when the sharp and sustained rattle of a brass drum beneath my window, dispelled these "troublous dreams." I jumped out of bed, and commenced collecting my habiliments, just as the piper-major of the Seventy-ninth struck up "a gathering" that would have started the seven sleepers, and convulsed any one but an admirer of Paganini.

Brussels was speedily in an uproar—soldiers hurried to their alarm-posts, and citizens peeped from their windows, or issued from the house to ascertain the causes of this general commotion. The streets were crowded to excess, as from every quarter of the city, cavalry, artillery and field equipages collected. The whole of the divisions were speedily ready for marching, and the infantry defiling by regiments, had already taken the road through the Wood of Soignes. By seven all was over; the troops were gone—the streets deserted—for those who, four hours before were figuring at the ball, were now advancing upon Quatre-Bras, directed by that harbinger of blood, "the cannon's opening roar."

As our's was a light, consequently it was a leading regiment. Every mile brought us nearer to the conflict. The distant and hollow booming of the guns changed to a lively cannonade, intermingled with the sharp and continued roll of musketry. Other tokens of "a foughten field" were not wanting; tumbrils and country-carts filled with wounded men passed us in quick succession, while many a poor fellow was stretched upon the road, where he had expired in a vain effort to seek assistance in the rear.

We had marched more than twenty miles before we reached Quatre-Bras, where the Prince of Orange had been hotly engaged since morning, and obliged to yield ground he could hold no longer, but every inch of which he had most gallantly contested. The battle was raging. To the right, the left, and before us, cannon and musketry were heard. There was small time for observation, for as they came up, each regiment deployed and took its ground. Nor was this easily done; favoured by the immense rye-crop, the French cavalry rushed on them before they formed. In some in-

stances the Lancers charged with partial success—but generally they received a shattering volley that sent them to the right about, or found the British in square, which, while its ridge of steel was impassible to every effort, threw in volley after volley so close and murderous, that before its ceaseless storm, man and horse went down in hundreds.

On the right of our position, the Bois de Bossu had been occupied by a Belgian corps; but they had been driven in, and the French occupied it in force. This wood was of paramount importance, and it must be recovered—for under its cover, the French could suddenly debouch and seize the Brussels road. The Rifles were ordered to retake it, and in a few minutes we were hotly engaged with the French light infantry.

It was a beautiful affair. Where the wood was thick we availed ourselves of the cover, and, extending from tree to tree, pressed the Tirailleurs sharply. The rifle did excellent service, and gradually the French lost ground, till we reached the extremity of the wood, when we formed, fixed swords, and pushed the

enemy fairly across the ravine beyond it. But, once debouched, a storm of grape saluted us; immediately the cavalry charged; and we were driven for shelter to the trees. Fresh light troops entered the wood—skirmishing recommenced; gradually pressed by numbers, we in our turn were forced back, and after a fierce and sanguinary struggle, once more the French light infantry possessed the Bois de Bossu.

At that critical moment, General Maitland and the Guards arrived after a fifteen hours' march, and the Duke ordered them to support us, and attack the wood instantly. Wearied, but with unbroken spirits, on they went. Another affair ensued, and for three hours the Bois de Bossu was furiously contested. At last the French abandoned it altogether—night ended the combat—Ney fell back on Frasnes—and we bivouacked on the ground, which we regained with such loss of life. Fatigued and hungry, I threw myself underneath a tree and slept soundly till morning dawned.

The sun rose gloomily, the rain fell fast, and everything foretold a coming tempest. I made

my first and only meal that day on a crust or two of stale bread, with a flask of excellent brandy, which my servant had found in the haversack of a dead voltigeur. It was indeed a fortunate discovery; and I shared it with a brave companion, who, though wounded severely, was too gallant to go to the rear. Most of the brigades had joined us over night, and momentarily we expected battle. But Blucher had fallen back, and a corresponding movement was necessary on the part of Wellington. It was done; we retired by Genappe; and after a masterly retreat, marked by some slight affairs of cavalry, we halted on the night of the seventeenth upon the ridge of Waterloo.

The march had been very distressing; bad weather, execrable roads, and short rations, were discouraging enough after one sanguinary conflict, and preparatory to another and a deadlier one to-morrow. But we were formed of stubborn materials; the elements themselves could not subdue British resolution, which even amid pain, fatigue, and hunger, proved itself indomitable.

The night continued stormy; it thundered

and lightened, and the rain fell in torrents. With difficulty the fires were lighted, and kept up from the supplies that the neighbouring forest yielded. At last the eighteenth dawned. Gloomily the morning rose; but with the first light we were busily engaged. The arms were dried—the rations, scanty and bad, discussed—the positions of regiments marked or corrected, till at eleven the sun shone out, and soon after, under a storm of artillery, Jerome Bonaparte advanced on Hougoumont, and Waterloo, glorious Waterloo, commenced!

We were pushed forward in front of the fifth division, occasionally fighting in extended order, as we lined the ravine in front of the position, or, when threatened with a charge of cavalry, uniting and forming square, like the rest of the infantry. The regiments composing Picton's division were stationed in the left centre, behind a broken hedge, which, although it partially masked the position, from its numerous openings allowed sufficient room for cavalry to charge. Some Belgian light troops, posted in front, were driven in about two o'clock, and told that the storm that had been

raging on the right of the line, was now about to be directed against the left centre.

We were skirmishing in extended order along the crest of the ravine, between our own troops and the French masses, when a furious cannonade announced the coming tempest, and falling back, we formed on the flank of a Highland regiment. D'Erlon's corps ascended the ridge—his infantry in close column, while the cavalry galloped down the face of the position, or rode in between the squares, to discover if any of the British regiments had been shaken by the fire of the artillery. A body of Cuirassiers furiously attacked the Highlanders on our left. But the square was perfect, and its musketry opened with such sustained precision that the horsemen were forced to recoil. In their retreat, they passed us within thirty paces, and we had reserved our fire. Although they rode off at speed, and to clear the face of our square was but the work of a minute, yet they went down by dozens, and a line of men and horses stretched along the rye, showed that few triggers of the Ninety-fifth had been idly drawn.

While the broken cavalry rode over the

ridge, only to form again and renew their desperate efforts, the French masses advanced boldly to the hedge, and at the same moment, "the fighting Fifth," deployed at the other side, came on to meet them, and the muskets of the rival infantry almost touched each other. At that moment, Picton gave the word to charge—instantly, Kempt's brigade cleared the fence—Pack's rushed forward to support it—and the French, instead of being assailants, found themselves assailed. They delivered one well-directed volley, and commenced retiring in perfect order. But British blood was roused; the Fifth pressed forward with the bayonet, and the French feebly resisted, fell in hundreds, and a series of murderous combats followed. The infantry were driven across the ridge; and the cavalry who came to their relief, charged in line with the bayonet, and forced over the ravine with prodigious loss. Picton fell while executing this brilliant charge. For an hour this sanguinary conflict raged, till the plateau in front of the position was totally abandoned by the French, who left three thousand bodies on the ground.

A lull succeeded; but it was only till fresh troops could be brought forward. It was five o'clock; the French batteries were reinforced and advanced, and opening a sweeping fire of grape, prepared us for another effort. Again we formed square; but alas! two hours had diminished it sadly. We had lost all our field officers; the captains were *hors de combat;* and a junior commanded the regiment. The storm of grape continued, and the men fell fast. A regiment of Cuirassiers appeared in front, while a body of red lancers of the guard threatened us in flank and rear. This was a trying moment, and hearts beat fast, but not from fear. Our swords were screwed on, the face of the square corrected, and while shells exploded and shot hailed upon us to cover the advance of the cavalry, the Ninety-fifth remained firm, calm, and determined.

On they came! "fierce as the bursting thunder-cloud;" but they found us ready to receive them. Our front rank presented an unbroken line of glittering sword-blades, while the rear poured over the heads of their kneeling comrades a continued stream of fire, that—for every bullet

found its mark—brought the assailants to the earth in dozens. Unable to endure this withering fusilade, at length they turned and went off. Up rose the front rank, and threw in their reserved fire; and that parting volley searched many a back-piece, and sent many a charger across the hill with empty saddle.

It was then that Wellington and his staff rode up, and his quick eye discovering that most of the officers were fallen, himself gave the word—"Well done, Ninety-fifth! Unfix swords; left face; extend again; and we shall drive these rascals across the hill." No more was wanted; we cheered, broke into skirmishing order, spread over the rising ground, and kept up an independent fire, wherever a group or officer was seen whom a rifle-ball would reach.

We were curiously posted; the crests of the respective hills occupied by the conflicting hosts were considerably higher than the broken ground on which we were extended; and, as the cannonade was furious on either side, the hissing of the "iron shower" that swept but a few feet over us, was anything

but agreeable. We lay about one hundred and fifty paces in front of the British position, and commanded a more extensive view of the hostile operations than any of the regiments in line. Wherever the wreaths of dense smoke allowed the eye to penetrate, the field of battle exhibited a scene of boundless devastation. Dismounted guns, and ruined equipages of all descriptions, were strewn everywhere about. The height of the rye generally concealed the carcases of the slain, but other and certain tokens pointed out the many that had already fallen. Troops of horses without riders were careering along the ridge; some with astonishing sagacity remained with their companions, imitated their movements, and accompanied the regiment when it charged, and followed it when retreating; others fed quietly in the valley that lay between the combatants, and, undismayed by the thunder of five hundred cannon, obeying animal instinct, cropped the tall grain, to all appearance as undisturbed as when picketed before the battle commenced.

The sun was descending rapidly, when our attention was directed towards Fischermont by

a loud and irregular cannonade. It was evident that fresh troops were coming into action; but whose were they? Grouchy or Blucher had arrived—and which? That was a momentous question. This uncertainty was short; the cannonade upon the left became louder and more continued, and our own batteries were advanced nearer to the ridge, where the British line, for the last half hour, had been gradually converging.

It was evident that a mighty movement was preparing by the enemy; columns were seen forming, and a new and furious effort was about to be made. Three grand attacks, each in itself a battle, had failed—and night and Blucher were approaching.

It was seven o'clock — the Prussians had come up in force, and the French right began to retrograde. The fate of the day was hurrying to its crisis—Napoleon's fortune was on "a die"—and he well knew that by a desperate essay alone he could turn a fight which every moment was becoming less doubtful. The Imperial Guard was therefore formed for attack, and Ney, "the child of victory," ordered to lead it on.

Wellington also, had marked the crisis; and the English Guards were advanced to the brow of the ridge, formed four deep, and ordered to lie down to avoid the cannonade, until the moment for action came. Vandeleur's and Vivian's brigades of light cavalry were brought from the left to support the intended effort of the centre; while, covered by a storm of artillery, the Imperial Guards mounted the height in close column.

Although the fire of the British batteries mowed them down, at cannister-range, and the converged fusilade of the right wing was "fast and furious," this splendid soldiery undauntedly came on, with the war-cry of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" They crossed the ridge —and then the household troops of England rose in vengeance, cheered, and rushed forward with the bayonet. The Duke, who had watched the moment, rode up, ordered us to fix swords, and united with the Forty-second, led us on in person. Ours was a flanking movement, while the Guards drove Ney back in front. They pressed the French across the height, while we rushed forward to support

them. A tirailleur battalion threw itself across us; but we swept it from our path—our sword-blades met the French bayonets, and on the other flank, in galloped our light cavalry. Sabred and bayoneted on every side, the middle guard became a mob. Some battalions of the Old, gallantly but vainly, endeavoured, by forming square, to cover the rout of their companions; but the British charge was irresistible—all went down before it—and a massacre, and not a fight, succeeded.

I had hitherto escaped with but two trifling scratches. Hurried on by the frenzy of the scene, and the hotness of young blood on a "first field," I quickly found myself in the thickest of the *mêlée*, where sabre and bayonet were the only weapons employed. The artillery (our own) had ceased firing—for we were all intermingled, and fighting hand to hand. A grizzled grenadier of the Old Guard, with two orders on his breast, made a full lounge at me, and I felt the bayonet glancing along my ribs. I returned it with a sheer sabre-cut, which brought the veteran to his knees. An Irish guardsman—for he swore awfully in the sweet

and euphonous language of "my native land"—beat out his brains with a clubbed musket. I cut down a stray tirailleur pretty cleverly—and next moment was felled to the ground. A dozen English hussars rode over me—a stream of blood obscured my sight—I felt a few knocks like the kicks of a charger—became insensible and lay among the dead and dying, as the last glint of sunshine faded on the field of battle.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FIELD OF BATTLE.

The infinities of agony,
Which meet the gaze, whate'er it might regard—
The groan, the roll in dust, the all-white eye
Turned back within its socket: these reward
Your rank and file by thousands, while the rest
May win perhaps a ribbon at the breast.
* * * * *
Let not his mode of raising cash seem strange,
Although he fleeced the *dead* of every nation,
For into a prime minister but change
His title, and 'tis nothing but taxation;
But he, more modest, took an humbler range
Of life, and eke an honester vocation.

Don Juan.

WATERLOO was won; the sun set upon a scene of slaughter, and the stillness of death succeeded the roar of battle. The thunder of four hundred cannon—the roll of musketry—the shock of mail-clad horsemen—the Highland slogan—the Irish huzza, were heard no

more ; and the moon gleamed coldly on a field of death, whose silence was only broken by the groans of the wounded, as they lay in helpless wretchedness beside their dead companions.

While many a sufferer listened to every sound in anxious expectation of relief, a dropping fire was occasionally heard in the direction of Genappe, announcing that the broken army of Napoleon was fiercely followed by its conquerors.

Wearied by the unparalleled exertions of the tremendous day of Waterloo, the British pursuit gradually relaxed, and the light cavalry halted on the road to Quatre-Bras ; but the Prussians, less fatigued, continued to harass the flying enemy, and the mingled mass of fugitives were forced from every village where they had attempted to form bivouacks. A barrier was hastily thrown across the entrance of Genappe, to arrest the progress of the yagers and hussars that hung upon the rear of the guard ; but it was blown down by a few discharges of a howitzer, and the French were driven from the town. Throughout the disastrous night, not a moment of repose was granted to the

terror-stricken multitude. To attempt anything like serious resistance to their pursuers, where all were inextricably confused, was absurd. Officers and soldiers were mobbed together; discipline had ended; none attempted to direct where none were found to obey; and with unrelenting fury the Prussian cavalry sabred the exhausted fugitives, till, after passing Gossilies and Charleroi, the wreck of Napoleon's army found a temporary shelter beneath the walls of Philippeville.

That night, the British bivouack was close to the same ridge which their beaten enemy had occupied on the preceding one; and as I lay upon the ground, I heard at times, and at no great distance from me, the voices of my more fortunate companions who had "escaped from the slaughter," and were roaming over the field in search of plunder. Momentarily, I expected that some friendly straggler would pass by. I must have been for a considerable period insensible, for the place where I fell, although the theatre of the final struggle between the relics of Ney's division and the British Guards and cavalry, was now totally deserted by the living, and cumbered only with the dying and the dead.

I seemed as if awakening from a dream; a difficulty of respiration painfully annoyed me, and I endeavoured to rise; but a weight too mighty to be removed pressed me to the earth. My sight was imperfect, my eyelids felt closed. I disengaged my left-hand, and raising it to my face, found that a mask of congealed blood covered it. I rubbed it away, and, prepared as I was for a sanguinary spectacle by the tortuous moanings of wounded men and dying horses, I closed my eyes in horror, when the clear cold moonlight revealed the sickening scene.

Directly over me, and in the very attitude in which he had groaned his last, an officer of the middle guard was stretched — our faces were nearly touching, and his open eyes had fixed their glassy stare on mine. A sword-cut had divided his upper lip, and exposing the teeth, gave to the dead man's countenance a grin so horrible and ghastly, that I who had witnessed death in every form, was glad to avert my eyes. I made a desperate effort to shake him off; but a horse's neck rested on my legs, and my feeble exertions were quite unequal to rid me of this double load.

While suffering great inconvenience of posi-

tion, I felt the cold intense, and thirst intolerable. No relief was attainable; the groans of the dying were unheard, and I sullenly submitted to my fate. But morning must soon break, and then probably I should be succoured. Could I but disengage myself from the dead man who pressed me almost to suffocation, I might endure pain, cold, and thirst. I made another effort—it failed—and in despair I laid my head upon the ground, moistened with my own blood and that of my departed enemy. Just then a voice immediately beside me, uttered a feeble supplication for some water. I turned my head, and saw a young ensign, whose leg had been shattered by the wheels of a gun, raise himself upon his elbow, and look across the field, in hope of discovering some one who would relieve him. Nor were his cries unheard: a man dressed in the dark uniform of a Prussian yager, and armed with the short sword which rifle-troops carry, approached the sufferer; but, alas! his was not the errand of mercy. Seizing the wounded man rudely, and deaf to his entreaties, he commenced his work of plunder. I heard the chinking of a purse,

and a trinket, a watch, or locket, glittered in the moonlight, as he tore it from the bosom of the prostrate soldier.

"Oh, no, no, I cannot, will not part with that!" a low weak voice muttered; "it was my mother's dying gift—I will never part with it." A struggle ensued, but it was a short one: as the ruffian, irritated at resistance, raised himself, and with one home-thrust silenced the poor youth for ever. Great God! that such a scene of death should be increased by the hand of murder!

I grew sick—I feared to breathe—my death was to be the next, for he had quickly plundered the body of his victim, and turned to the dead guardsman who lay across my breast. Suddenly he stopped, listened, and gazed suspiciously around; then sank down behind a horse, and stretched himself upon the field.

My heart beat again. Two men came forward, and they too were plundering. But, surely, all could not be so ruthless as the crouching wretch beside me? Nearer and nearer they approached—and, sounds of joy! they conversed in my native tongue. I listen-

ed with exquisite delight, and never did human voices appear so sweet as theirs! They were grenadiers of the line, and one of them wore a sergeant's stripes. Without a moment's hesitation I addressed them; and an appeal in their native language was not disregarded. I was promptly answered in kindly tones; and while one caught the defunct Frenchman by the collar and flung him aside, his comrade extricated my legs from the dead charger, and assisted me to rise up.

I found myself in the centre of a heap of corpses; to take a second step without treading on a body was impossible; yet I scarce regarded the scene of slaughter—my eyes were riveted upon one corpse, that of the poor lad whom the crouching yager had so brutally murdered.

I stood up with difficulty—a faintness overpowered me — I staggered, and would have fallen, but the sergeant supported me, while his comrade held a canteen to my mouth. It contained brandy diluted with water, and, to one parched as I was, the draught was exquisitely grateful. My deliverers appeared anxious to move off, either to obtain fresh plunder or se-

cure that already acquired; and which, to judge from the size of their havresacs, must have been considerable. I begged them to assist me from the field; but they declined it, alleging that they must rejoin their regiment before daybreak. At this moment my eyes encountered those of the yager, who lay as motionless behind the dead horse as any of the corpses that surrounded him. If I remained—and I could not walk without support—the chances were immense that the villain would speedily remove one who had witnessed a deed of robbery and murder, and I made a fresh appeal to my worthy countrymen.

"Sergeant, I will reward you handsomely—do not desert me."

"I cannot remain longer, sir: morning is breaking, and you will soon have relief enough," was the reply.

"It will never reach me: there is one within three paces, who will not permit me to look upon another sun."

Both soldiers started.

"What do you mean?" exclaimed the sergeant eagerly.

"Mark you that Prussian sharp-shooter, who skulks behind the horse?"

"What of him?" asked the grenadier.

"Yonder dead officer supplicated assistance from that scoundrel, and he answered him with curses, and commenced plundering him directly. I saw him take a purse, and tear away his epaulette. Some other article the poor fellow feebly attempted to retain; and the yager, before my eyes, stabbed him to the heart. Hearing your approach, he flung himself behind that charger: need I add, that there he lies until you leave this spot, and that I shall most probably be his next victim?"

"You shall not, by Heaven!" exclaimed the soldier, as he drew his sword and stepped over the dead horse. The Prussian, who had no doubt watched the conference attentively, sprang upon his feet on the first movement of the sergeant; but his fate was sealed: before the soldier's comrade could unsheath his bayonet, the yager was cut down, and the murderer rolled in the agonies of death beside the unfortunate youth: whom but a few minutes before he had so ruthlessly slaughtered.

The corpse was speedily plundered by the grenadiers, and the spoil of the rifleman, when united to their booty, made as I suspect, a valuable addition.

The moonlight was now yielding to the grey tint of early day, and the chief cause of my apprehensions being removed by the yager's death, I found leisure to scrutinize my deliverers.

The first was a very powerful and athletic man, whose years might be set down at forty: his vigorous frame was perfectly unbroken, and his look bespoke a daring and unhesitating resolution. Indeed, his whole appearance was much above his rank: he seemed a war-worn, dissipated soldier; to him a field of battle was no novelty; and the perfect *nonchalance* with which he despatched the Prussian, betrayed a recklessness regarding human life rather befitting a bandit than a soldier.

His companion, a very young man, was a fine strapping flanker, and in everything appeared to be wholly governed by the will of his comrade. He touched the dead, I thought, with some repugnance, and seemed of gentler heart and

milkier disposition than might be expected in a midnight plunderer upon a battle-field.

"See, the dawn breaks rapidly," said the non-commissioned officer to the young grenadier: "we must be off, Macmanus. We leave you safe, sir; yonder black sharp-shooter will never draw another trigger. Pick up a musket for the gentleman; we must not leave him without the means of keeping stragglers at a distance, should any come prowling here, before the fatigue-parties arrive to carry off the wounded. Here, sir, take another pull at the brandy-flask; nothing keeps up a sinking heart so well."

"Thanks, my kind fellow, I owe you a life. Had you left me to yon black scoundrel, he would have served me as he did our comrade there. What are your names—your regiment? I shall take care to report your timely services to—"

The elder of the grenadiers laughed. "You are but a young soldier, sir, and this, as I suspect, your first field. I know you mean us kindly, but silence is the best service you can render us. We should have been with the advance near Genappe, instead of collecting lost

property upon the plains of Waterloo. Well, we fought hard enough yesterday to allow us a right to share what no one claims, before the Flemish clowns come here by cock-crow. Adieu!" As he spoke, his companion handed me a musket, after trying the barrel with a ramrod, and ascertaining from flint and pan that it was both loaded and serviceable.

"Enough—I ask no questions. But here are a few guineas."

"Which we do not require," said the sergeant. "We have made a good night's work, and your money, young sir, we neither want nor take. If we have rendered you service, it was for the sake of the old country. It is hard to shut one's ears, when the first language that we lisped in from the cradle asks pity in the field. Farewell, sir; morning comes on apace."

"And yet," I replied, "I might perhaps at some time serve you. You know the fable. The mouse once cut a net, and saved a lion. I am indeed but a young soldier—but should I be able to be serviceable at any future period, ask for Jack Blake, and he'll remember the night of Waterloo."

"Blake!" said the elder grenadier with sharpness. "Are you from Galway?"

"I am."

"What family? The Blakes are numerous."

"Mine are of Castle Blake."

"Your father's name is Manus," said the sergeant, "if I recollect right?"

"No—he is my uncle. My parent died many years ago—I have no remembrance of him."

The soldier started—"It could not be the same," he muttered; "was he in the army?"

"Yes."

"His rank?"

"A colonel."

"His name?"

"Cæsar."

"Now, by my hopes of mercy!" exclaimed the sergeant, "I would not for all the plunder in the field have parted from you in ignorance. Macmanus, we must remove this gentleman. We will accompany him to Brussels. You and I, comrade, have wounds enough to plead

apology for the hospital. You have a gash in the arm, and I a clip upon the skull, and a lance-cut in the shoulder. None of them, Mac, in faith, are mortal, but quite enough to qualify better heroes for the surgeon's hands. Come, sir, let men say what they will, there is a Providence that watches all."

Was it not strange? The man with whom entreaty failed, and money proved unavailing, conveyed me from the field with the tenderness a parent would exhibit to his only boy. Frequently he moistened my lips with brandy, and when nature was exhausted, his powerful strength sustained my sinking frame.

The sun rose rapidly, we gained the ruined—causeway that crossed the field of battle — and early as it was, a Flemish peasant was there with his cart. My protector seized the horse, and pointing to Brussels, offered him five Napoleons if he would convey me thither—the Belgian shook his head. Next and best argument, a sabre dyed with recent blood was unceremoniously produced. This seemed conclusive, and the peasant pocketed the money."

I was carefully placed in the rude vehicle, while my companions seated themselves at my side, and supported me by turns. Loss of blood, brandy too liberally administered, fatigue, the revulsion of over-excited spirits, all united to overpower me. I sunk back in the sergeant's arms—and Waterloo, though I crossed its hard-fought field, fades from my memory, and I recollect no more.

CHAPTER X.

I'll tell you who they were, this female pair,
Lest they should seem princesses in disguise;
* * * * * *
Mistress and maid; the first the only daughter
Of an old man.

Don Juan.

Difficult as our passage was across the field of battle, our route through the forest of Soignies was still more impracticable. By its solitary causeway a splendid *corps d'armée* had advanced three mornings since, in all "the pride, pomp, and circumstance of war;" now it was choked with broken equipages and dead horses—wounded men toiling slowly towards Brussels for relief—the bodies of many whose life had left them in the attempt—dismounted guns, disabled waggons—caps, drums, sabres,

helmets—in short, all the wreck and ruin that the rear of even a victorious army exhibits. Through these mementos of a hard-contested fight, our light cart slowly but safely progressed; and when I recovered my recollection, I found myself seated on some litter in a handsome street near the Grand Hotel, supported by a grenadier, while a Belgian girl bathed my face with water, and moistened my lips with wine.

I looked wildly round, as a man starts from a troubled dream. I remembered Macmanus instantly: dark and painful associations accompanied this recognition of my deliverer; the field of battle, the dead guardsman, the murdered youth, the black yager—all passed in shadowy succession, and I closed my eyes and fainted.

I was speedily restored, and on other objects my eyes opened. Macmanus was gone; I had been removed from the street: the young Belgian no longer attended me: a pretty English-looking female stood beside the bed, and a middle-aged man held my pulse, and anxiously watched my recovery.

"Where am I?" I exclaimed with a wild stare.

"Hush, my young friend; you are in very kind hands: obey me, keep quiet, and you will be speedily afoot."

"Am I in hospital?"

"You are far more comfortably situated," was the reply. "The hospitals are crowded; you are under a private roof; there stands your nurse, and I am your physician."

"My sight is bad. Where are the grenadiers? — the private with the wounded arm, and the sergeant that cut down the Prussian sharp-shooter."

"He is wandering," the doctor whispered to the nurse.

"I am not, by Heaven!" I exclaimed passionately. "I saw him stab the officer; there was only a dead horse between us" — and I continued a wild and unconnected tale of facts and fancies, in which Quatre-Bras and Waterloo were mingled with scenes of very different description; and the names of Wellington and O'Moore ridiculously confused with those of

Blucher and Lucinda Daly. Gradually, however, my ravings ceased, and under the influence of a powerful narcotic I became composed; love and war disturbed me with their alarms no longer; a deep sleep succeeded, and for twelve hours my repose was calm and unbroken as an infant's.

When I awoke, twilight had set in; another stranger watched me, for a plainly-dressed elderly male servant was peeping through the curtains. It was evident that I was an object of constant and kind solicitude: my head, dressed and bandaged, was resting on a down pillow; my blood-stained linen had been changed; the room was darkened, and those who were in it moved upon tiptoe when they entered or departed.

"Is he awake, Robert?" said the same female whom I had noticed with the physician in the morning.

The person to whom the question was addressed lifted the curtains to look.

"I am not only awake, my good friend," I replied, "but wonderfully recruited with the refreshing sleep I have enjoyed. But where am

I?—under what roof?—and to whom am I indebted for this generous attention?" I strove to raise myself upon my elbow; both attendants gently opposed it, and the attempt convinced me of my weakness. No wonder I was feeble; beside the blood I lost upon the field, a considerable quantity had been taken from my arm by order of the doctor.

Two days passed, and I experienced unremitting attention; my wounds assumed a healthy appearance, fever abated, and the medical adviser pronounced that my recovery would be a rapid one. Still I remained ignorant of the name of my benefactor; and on this subject, a concealment was observed that seemed unnecessary and inexplicable. Of the country or grade of the persons to whom I was so deeply indebted for timely succour, I could only conjecture aught from the style of their attendants; and I concluded, after a critical examination of the domestics, that they were an English family of respectability not moving in the foremost ranks of fashion. What rendered this mysterious *incognito* of my host so remarkable was, that on every subject beside,

Robert, his chief minister, was exceedingly communicative. He was an intelligent person in his way, and acquainted me with the political events and military movements, as they occurred subsequent to the battle.

The third day passed; my strength returned, my curiosity increased, and the mystery remained impenetrable: for every indirect effort to unravel it was unsuccessful. I tried Robert, and he answered my inquiry with a shake of the head, profound enough for Lord Burleigh; the doctor proved inexorable to all entreaty; and Annette, though supplicated by her black eyes and well-turned ankle, was mute as if she had been dumb from the cradle. Was ever anything more provoking? The very sex of my benefactor was unknown: I might be beholden to the bounty of an old bachelor, or under the immediate *surveillance* of a blooming belle. Except this teazing uncertainty, I had nothing to complain of; I was tenderly nursed, everything I required was supplied, and my very wishes were anticipated. My own portmanteaus and dressing-case had been conveyed from my former lodgings: in short, I was most

agreeably cantoned, and in all Brussels there was not an invalid so comfortably and so mysteriously circumstanced as myself.

A restless spirit like mine tires of the confinement of a sick room. I had no companions to come in and while away a tedious hour; for my acquaintances in the city were limited to three or four brother-officers, and they were more severely wounded than myself; my servant, a private in the Rifles, had fallen on the 16th, skirmishing in the Bois de Bossu; my regiment joined Colville's brigade on the 19th, and pushed forward with the leading division; the soldiers who brought me off the field had disappeared: I was totally deserted, and all around me were strangers, though, in sooth, they were very kind ones.

The third evening came. Once or twice since morning I had heard the tinkle of a guitar, and I felt convinced that the musician was at no great distance from my chamber. Uncertainty became intolerable; I made another attempt upon Annette, and, like the preceding ones, it proved a failure. She coquetted with me freely, but was too guarded to permit

my *badinage* to extract a particle of information. Again an instrument was touched, and, as I thought, a voice accompanied it. I was dying of curiosity, and implored Annette to relieve it: I swore that my discretion was unbounded, and that the secret should never escape. The *demoiselle* appeared to relent, and of course, I became more eloquent and urgent. She approached the sofa, which I was now stout enough to occupy, and leaned over me; I caught her hand.

"Do, dear, dear Annette, tell me who the lady is—she who plays and sings so prettily?"

"You would betray me to Robert," she whispered archly.

"No, on my soul! You are far too handsome to be ill-natured. Will you not trust me? You must, you will."

"And you can keep a secret?" said the *soubrette*.

"I can indeed!"

"And so can I!" exclaimed the tormenting gipsey, as she tapped my cheek playfully, and ran laughing from the room.

What could I do? Nothing but curse

Annette, try to sleep, and thus forget my disappointment.

In half an hour the traitress returned. I was pettish as a schoolboy, remained silent on the sofa, and determined to eschew flirtation.

"Hist, captain! surely you can't be sleeping?"

I kept my eyes closed: the attendant advanced on tiptoe, and examined me attentively, while I breathed heavily.

"He took his draught too soon, the simpleton! Well, now is the time!" and she tripped lightly from the room, leaving me, as she believed, "fast as a watchman."

Her absence was but short: she returned, and not alone. I heard a whispering, and the speakers approached me cautiously.

"Well, Miss Emily, am I not a silly girl to run such risk, and gratify your curiosity?"

"How soundly he sleeps!" said a voice so soft and thrilling that I felt the blood rush to my cheeks. "See—how feverish he is!—how his face flushes, Annette! I fear he is not so well as the doctor thinks him to be."

I would have given a finger for a peep, but

feared to open an eyelid, lest the fair visiter should take alarm and fly from the apartment. Was I, then, under the protection of this gentle being? I feared to breathe, lest one syllable she uttered should escape me, while again she addressed the attendant.

"How differently he looks, Annette, to what he did when, on that fearful morning, he was left upon the street bleeding and lifeless. How I trembled when I requested my father's leave to have him carried in, for fear he would refuse me. Does he sleep long, Annette?"

"Oh yes, for hours; but that is no reason we should dally. Lord! if Robert found us here, I should lose my place, and, in spite of gout and rheumatism, before midnight struck, you would be hurried off, Heaven knows whither; for a soldier's very name terrifies the old gentleman. Hist! is that a step in the corridor? Come, Miss Emily," and Annette made a movement towards the door.

I ventured to look up: a beautiful girl was leaning over me, and eyes of soft and gentle expression met mine. She started, and uttered a half-suppressed exclamation.

"Stay, lady; fear nothing; I would not for worlds alarm you! Permit me but to thank you as I should, and offer you the poor acknowledgement of my gratitude."

I caught her hand; surprise deprived her of the power to leave me; while Annette, thunderstruck at the discovery, vainly endeavoured to disengage her lovely companion from my firm but gentle hold.

"Unhand me, sir!" said the same sweet voice that had fascinated me. "I am punished for my imprudence, and I deserve it: indeed, we thought you were sleeping."

Poor girl, her alarm was pitiable.

"Come, sir!" said Annette, "is this fair?—is it honourable? You little dream what mischief our imprudence and your folly may occasion. Do let my mistress leave this room."

"And shall I never again see you, lady? I may not, dare not, risk offence by detaining you for a moment; you are at perfect liberty. You saved my life; you came, angel-like, to relieve me; may I not thank you? Shall I not, when I quit this couch of sickness, kneel at your feet, and bless you as my deliverer?"

"Well, well," exclaimed Annette impatiently; "Miss Emily may not possibly, object hereafter to a visit; but, for Heaven's sake! do not delay us now."

The hand I held in mine trembled—timidly I touched it with my lips — deep burning blushes overspread the loveliest face I had ever looked upon till now; and next moment I was alone, and Emily and her companion had disappeared.

My heart throbbed wildly. And was this my gentle preserver? The mystery was dissolving fast; Annette was now in my power, and I would soon wring the secret from her. Before many minutes elapsed, other footsteps sounded in the gallery, and Robert, attended by the doctor, entered my apartment.

The latter touched my pulse, seemed astonished, and he pronounced me feverish. This he had not expected; but he would send me a composing draught; and after a brief visit, both retired.

Feverish, indeed, I was; but they little guessed the cause: agitation, and not disease, occasioned it. Weak and nervous as I was, I

half imagined the late occurrence a coinage of the brain, and the young and lovely being who visited my chamber, only the splendid creation of excited fancy. But Annette's return realised the whole, and my beautiful visiter was indeed her mistress and my protector.

That night I found it impossible to converse with the *soubrette* in private, as more than once Robert interrupted our *tête-à-tête*. Early next day the hospital director visited, and pronounced me convalescent, and gave me permission to leave my room. My wounds were healing fast, and weakness alone remained. With Robert's assistance I dressed, and was conducted to a lower apartment that looked upon a pretty flower-garden in the rear of the mansion. All day I hoped to gain a passing glimpse of the gentle Emily; but, alas! I hoped in vain. I heard occasionally the tinkle of a guitar; and through the open window, once or twice a voice reached me, whose silver tones could never be mistaken. Robert, as usual, was constant in his attendance; and every delicacy suited to recruit the strength of an invalid was liberally supplied. But no Annette. Where

was she? I dared not ask, lest the question should create suspicion. The day wore heavily through; I thought it endless. At last, evening fell; and when the time arrived when I should retire for the night, Robert lighted me to my chamber, undressed, assisted me to bed, and left me to court repose.

If the gentle god did not descend upon my lids with his accustomed alacrity, I had none but myself to blame; for, if the truth were told, I went to bed the sulkiest gentleman in Brussels.

CHAPTER XI.

A VISIT—EMILY CLIFDEN—AND A DISCOVERY.

Your love must live a maid at home,
And therefore has he closely mew'd her up,
Because she shall not be annoy'd with suitors.
Taming of the Shrew.

I never saw an elderly gentleman more astonished.
The Rivals.

Two days more and no intelligence — my life monotonous as that of a mill-horse — I ate, drank, slept, walked in the garden, listened to the guitar, and wondered what had spirited Annette away, whose good offices to me were now discharged by deputy, in the person of a fair Fleming.

I had imagined that when once able to move about, I should have found small difficulty in satisfying my curiosity with a full discovery of

my unknown protectors; but never was man more astray. My host was a phlegmatic Belgian, who adored his pipe and delighted in monosyllables—his wife deaf as a post—and the attendant willing enough to communicate information, of which however her stock was rather scanty. All I could learn was, that my benefactors were English travellers, who had been interrupted in their tour by the unexpected advance of Napoleon; and that the old gentleman was laid up by a severe attack of gout, and the young lady a close prisoner in the drawing-room. Their names were Tomkins, or Thompson, or Thornton; and they were very wealthy, as they employed the best physician, and paid an exorbitant rent for their apartments. Moreover, it appeared that to the importunities of Mademoiselle I was indebted for my introduction to the mansion; and I could farther collect, that I should gratify the master and his man by shortening my visit, although the mistress and her maid, would willingly persuade the old gentleman that my cure was far from being complete.

Indeed, had I a doubt that by one moiety of

the household I was considered *un de trop*, Robert, as he placed wine and fruit upon the table after dinner, would have removed it. He complimented me upon my amended looks —hinted that confinement was not only unnecessary, but injurious, for the weather was beautiful, and I must be weary of the house. There was no mistaking him, and the sooner I beat a retreat the better.

I, of course, was not inclined to remain an intruder upon the hospitality of one who was, and determined to remain, a stranger; and therefore I requested apartments to be provided for me in a neighbouring hotel, whither I could remove next day. Robert received my commands with evident pleasure, and promised to execute them that very evening, as he had some business to transact in the city.

Left to myself, I could not but reflect on the very strange family to whom accident had introduced me. I was singularly circumstanced—the object of unwilling attention; a guest tolerated, but not welcomed; entertained *in formâ pauperis*, as they say in law, rather than with the free spirit a generous host exhibits to

a fellow-gentleman when residing beneath his roof-tree. And who was he who looked upon me with suspicion, and avoided all personal acquaintance as if I had been a highwayman? From anything I could conjecture, he might be an East-end stock-broker, a dyer from Leeds, a razor-maker from Sheffield, or a pluralist from Cambridge; and would I, in whose veins the reddest blood in Galway circulated, brook such indignities from one who might have been vulgar enough to make a fortune? The thing was intolerable!

I had been, in honour of my convalescence, allowed three glasses of wine by the physician; but, from wounded pride I fancy, I forgot the reckoning. As the flask diminished, the blood of the Blakes rose in inverse proportion, and the eyes of an endless ancestry seemed turned on me—men who, for centuries, had been shooting others, and been shot themselves—who had broken necks and tradesmen—ran off with, or from, wives by the score—and, in short, lived and died as became one of the "tribes," and gentlemen of consideration. I filled another bumper and peeped into the large pier-glass. I had

been that morning rather particular with my toilet; my braided jacket was a correct fit, my arm in a sling I thought was rather interesting, and the honourable scar across my forehead became well a true disciple of the sword. Tinkle went the guitar! I thought of the sweet blue eye that had gazed so tenderly on me a fictitious sleeper—and would I leave the house without bidding that fair girl farewell? Surely not.

Just then I heard Robert's voice in the lobby, giving directions to the young Belgian relative to certain matters to be attended to when he was absent. Now, then, was the time—the coast clear—the citadel unguarded! I looked in the pier-glass again. "Master Jack Blake," quoth Conceit, "there are worse-featured fellows in Brussels than thyself!"—Tinkle, tinkle!—"*En avant*, Jack Blake!" I crossed the room, and laid my hand upon the lock. Alas! the touch was a damper; mine was but Dutch courage after all, for like honest Bob's, it began to evaporate through the finger-ends. Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle! went the guitar. "What the deuce ails thee, Jack?" said Pride. "You who bore the brunt of Water-

loo gallantly, and crossed sabres with a veteran of ' the Guard !'"—Armed with that species of desperation, with which gentlemen who lead forlorn-hopes provide themselves, I mounted the staircase like a hero, and, instead of turning off by the narrow corridor to my own quarters, boldly pushed forward till I gained the landing-place, and stood before the apartment that contained " my own blue belle."

Yet, were I to confess the truth, I would have given a month's pay to have been again safely deposited in " mine own great chamber." " Hang it !" whispered Pride, " don't run, whatever you do." The instrument that I had faintly heard below, now sounded distinctly, and seemed touched by a practised hand, while a very sweet voice sang to its accompaniment a fashionable canzonet, which I had often heard and admired since I came to Brussels. It ceased : I dared not stay longer where I was, lest I should be detected and treated as a spy, and like Captain Absolute, invoked the powers of impudence to befriend me. I had nearly screwed up my courage to attempt an *entrée* of the premises, when the feat was rendered unnecessary,

— the door opened, and Annette unexpectedly presented herself.

I never witnessed a more confounded waiting-woman. For a moment both of us preserved a dignified silence, she being speechless from astonishment, while the opening address I had been preparing for the blue-eyed belle was not quite adapted to excuse my intrusion to the lady of the bedchamber.

"In the name of everything mischievous, what brought you here?" she said, in an under tone, which betrayed surprise and anger. I muttered something about gratitude, and leaving the house.

"Hang your gratitude!" said the attendant pettishly, "I wish you were with your regiment, or at the bottom of the sea, and we safe out of Brussels. How fortunate that Robert has gone to look after the carriage!"

"And procure lodgings for me, Annette."

"Ah, I did not know that he had been so usefully employed," said the attendant archly; "once he gets you fairly out of this house, we may then have a reasonable hope of quiet."

"Nay, dear Annette, I know you will be

distressed to lose your patient; but why desert me as you have done? My recovery has been retarded by your unkindness, and I have been dying piecemeal of neglect."

"But quite able, notwithstanding, to scamper over the house, and intrude upon apartments where it was never imagined you would have had assurance to approach," replied the waiting-woman.

"Well, well; my offences are nearly at an end; I leave this house in the morning, and in another day or two shall set out to join my regiment in France. I came now to bid Miss Emily adieu, and thank the prettiest nurse for her attentions, that ever smoothed a soldier's pillow." While speaking, I slipped a small purse into her hand, and snatched a kiss with all the discretion that an open door required. Was it gold, impudence, or flattery that succeeded? Annette relented.

"And are you leaving this, indeed, to-morrow?"

"Indeed, pretty one, I am; and I shall quit this house very wretched, if my kind nurse refuses me permission to bid her gentle lady farewell."

"May Heaven forgive you," said the *soubrette*, "if through mistaken compassion I agree; but there—go in—and like a dear good fellow promise me that you will not delay. If Robert returned unobserved, Miss Emily would be lectured, and I should lose my place."

"And is that all, Annette?"

"*That all!* Pray, worthy sir, could you provide me with another?" said the attendant with an *espiégle* look.

"Why faith, I fear a lady's-maid at the present moment would be rather an incumbrance; my provision for you, Annette, should therefore be a matrimonial one, and I would marry you to the sharpest shot in a picked company of Rifles."

"I thank you," replied the attendant, with a profound curtsey; "and, with the honour of his hand, I should have liberty, I suppose, to wash his shirts and share his daily shilling. No, gallant captain, I shall try and remain as I am; for, believe me, that neither my mistress nor myself are at present designed for campaigning."

She smiled significantly, and unclosed the door, which had been previously shut to.

"Miss Emily, here comes a gentleman to

take his leave; and if you will please to hint to him, that the more rapidly he ends the ceremony, the safer it will be for a certain lady and her maid." Then turning to me as I was about to enter, "Do not, for pity's sake, delay. Although I have been confined to my room these two days, and tortured by a vile tooth-ache, I must go and watch from the front window, lest Robert should return sooner than we expect, and discover how very prudently we have employed ourselves in his absence."

I firmly believe, that never was a more embarrassed gentleman introduced to the *boudoir* of a beauty. The hurried interview that accident procured for me, had fixed impressions on my fancy sufficiently favourable as to my fair protector; but they fell infinitely short of what the opening charms of this artless girl realized, as with a confusion greater than my own she requested me to be seated. I approached the sofa from which she had risen at my entrance. There lay the guitar—the music-book was open in the stand, while a portfolio, pencils and drawings, scattered round the table, marked the occupations which my

visit had interrupted. My address was sufficiently incoherent, but still fully as connected as the reply; and we sat down, endeavouring to find in the ordinary subjects of conversation some means of rendering our *tété-à-tété* less awkward than its opening foreboded.

But youth, unchilled by the frost of time, has nothing beyond a first timidity to overcome. I recovered my self-possession, while my fair companion's alarm appeared to subside rapidly. We were both thrown into a situation of some novelty—for she was the preserver, I the preserved. She soon began to ask questions relative to the battle; and as she listened to my narration of Waterloo, her cheeks blanched and glowed, as I described the changing fortunes of the field. No wonder that when Annette returned, she expressed boundless astonishment at finding us thus quietly engaged—and so quickly had time flown, that, while the *soubrette* declared she had been for an hour in the window, I should have guessed the extent of her watch at but a quarter of the period —were the mean between us taken, it would more likely describe the true time.

"Worthy captain," said the attendant, "how long, according to the regulations of your corps, will it be necessary for me to be exposed to the tooth-ache, while you return thanks to this young lady for obtaining your admission to this house, when tumbled from a cart upon the pavement, like a box of bad oranges?"

"Truly, pretty Mistress Annette, I am so very happy where I am, that I find it rather difficult to answer your question; for, were I permitted to exercise free-will, I should be in no hurry to recommence movements to the lower story."

"Remain, sir, if you please," returned the abigail smartly; "and when Robert comes back, I shall not be much surprised to see another personage added to the party—" and she directed the latter portion of her speech to her young mistress, with the petulance that a spoiled domestic will sometimes venture to use.

But Annette had probably calculated too far upon the forbearance of the fair girl her mistress. I saw her eye sparkle and her colour rise; and in a tone that forbade reply, she

calmly, but firmly, ordered her attendant from the room to bring up coffee in Robert's place."

When the *soubrette* had disappeared, we both remained for some moments silent. The lady, though visibly embarrassed, was the first to speak.

"I felt displeasure, sir, that my servant should question the right or propriety, of receiving my father's guest in my father's apartments. No doubt there may appear to you a mystery in our hospitality as far as yourself is concerned; and I shall be candid with you, and explain why any concealment has been resorted to. We live generally in great retirement; for my protector's health is infirm, and consequently his habits are not as sociable as otherwise they might be. An excursion, undertaken for my amusement, turned out from unforeseen occurrences anything but a pleasant one. We were nearly surprised by the French advance—driven back on Brussels—our carriage disabled — benighted in unfrequented roads — and, after an infinity of annoyances, with a broken vehicle and jaded horses, at last found shelter here. Fatigue and alarm brought upon

my father a violent attack of gout, which rendered him unable to move, when the success of the British arms had opened the communications, "which the inroad of the French had nearly interrupted. Here we of course remained for the first days, terrified lest Napoleon should succeed, and then shocked by hourly exhibitions of sufferers from the field of battle, who, from the evening of the 16th, passed our windows in endless succession on their way to the hospitals.

"Finding himself unable to bear a carriage, my father despatched a trusty servant to England to execute some important business, on the same morning that accident discovered you almost dead upon our threshold. I asked and obtained permission to have you removed from the street to the apartment recently vacated. Our servants were your nurses, and the family physician attended to your wounds. In intruding once upon your privacy, I trust a better motive than idle curiosity occasioned it; and indeed, sir, it was under the full conviction that you were sleeping securely from the influence of a composing draught."

As she alluded to the evening interview at my apartment, the colour on her cheeks rose; while I ardently expressed my gratitude, and assured her how perfectly I was aware, that to humanity alone I had been indebted for that visit. She smiled, and thus continued:—

"I apprised you that my father's habits are retired; and, averse to any intercourse with strangers, he made it a request that you should not be acquainted with even the name of him to whom you owed a temporary asylum. I promised to obey his wish, and I feel I have but to intimate that wish to you." I bowed respectful submission to the interdict, and she proceeded.

"We are here under assumed names—for there are persons in Brussels whom it is my father's pleasure to avoid. Possibly, at some future time, you and I, sir, may meet as we should do. Till then, we remain unknown—to you, as a guest—to me, as a daughter—my parent's wishes should be sacred."

I looked with astonishment at the beautiful being whose silver tones were still thrilling on my ear. She had not reckoned sixteen sum-

mers, and was opening into womanhood with a rich promise of surpassing loveliness. Tall, slight, and elegant, a few years would mature that nymph-like figure to perfection. Her face was rather intellectual than regular; and the intelligence her open brow and clear blue eye conveyed, was of that soft and confiding character, which requires unforeseen occurrences to elicit its latent spirit. Indeed, the recent excitement over, my gentle companion seemed alarmed at the effort she had made in addressing a stranger: the burning cheek, the downcast eye, told that natural timidity had resumed the mastery again, and a respectful acquiescence in her wishes for concealment was necessary on my part, to restore the ease and confidence of our interview.

Just then Annette returned; she placed a tray upon the table with coffee and fruit—curtsied with affected humility to the lady—gave me a look, arch, mischievous, and reproachful, and hastily retired.

The plot was thickening fast, for evening had overshadowed the "fair city," and wrapped it in "her sober livery." Had we been prudent,

our *tête-à-tête* should have terminated ere now—but, aware that Robert was directed personally to oversee the repairs of the carriage, I put my trust in the clumsiness of a Belgian artist, and sate on. Lights were brought in—coffee removed—Annette vanished—and Emily and I were left to discuss military affairs and new music.

As I gazed upon my fair companion, I thought her features were not altogether unknown. Where had I seen that face? In vain I taxed my memory; and yet, the more I looked, I felt the more convinced that Emily was not entirely a stranger. I should have expressed these suspicions, but it might appear an indirect attempt to satisfy a curiosity which she had inhibited so strongly. We talked freely, as young spirits will when graver looks are not present to control them: I turned her music over, praised the beautiful efforts of her pencil, admired some rare *bijouterie* in her buhl cabinet, when alas! the time-piece on the mantel struck ten. Emily started—I took the hint, rose to say farewell, with a full determination that, were I to put Robert to the sword, and

carry the drawing-room by escalade, I would obtain a parting interview on the morrow.

In the course of our *tête-á-tête*, I alluded to the death of a French colonel of voltigeurs, who had fallen in the affair of the Bois de Bossu at Quatre-Bras, and mentioned the celerity with which the body had been plundered. The corpse had been stripped before my own eyes; and as the gallant Frenchman was decorated with military vanity in the numerous insignia won by him on former fields, I obtained them from the spoilers for a couple of Napoleons. Emily had been interested in the detail, and as I happened to have the colonel's cross of the Legion of Honour in my sabretash, I pressed her to accept it. She would have declined receiving even this trifling token from a stranger, while I urged her to retain it, as a small memorial of one whom she had so generously relieved. She saw that a refusal pained me, and at last my entreaties prevailed.

"Farewell!" I said, "dear lady, may every blessing be your's! Sometimes think of one who never can forget you!" I raised the hand that held the cross respectfully to my lips—her

eyes sparkled—the roses covered her neck and brows—but the hand remained within my hold, and unreproved, my lips had touched it more than once.

At that moment, a gleam of light shot through the apartment and arrested our attention. We turned hastily round. In an open side-door, a tall figure arrayed in a loose dressing-gown, with a lighted taper in his hand, was standing, gazing on us with a stern and motionless expression, that seemed to belong rather to a marble effigy than breathing clay. I shuddered; but Emily, with a shriek, averted her face and fainted on the sofa.

To heighten the confusion, Robert and Annette added themselves to the company by another door. Both seemed astounded and irate—but to do her justice, the *soubrette*, in her ebullitions of sorrow and surprise, far exceeded the whole of the *dramatis personæ*—and no wonder.

CHAPTER XII.

INTERROGATORIES—AN UNEXPECTED RELATIVE—THE CROSS OF THE LEGION OF HONOUR.

High and inscrutable the old man stood,
Calm in his voice, and calm within his eye—
Not always signs with him of calmest mood.

BYRON.

Bassanio. Alas! it is a trifle;
I will not shame myself to give you this.
Portia. I will have nothing else but only this;
And now, methinks, I have a mind to it.

Merchant of Venice.

UNDISMAYED by the *brouillerie*, my first impulse was to fly to Emily's assistance, and support her with my unwounded arm; but the figure in the door-way advanced, and in a tone of command that intimated his will was arbitrary here, he motioned me to resign my charge to the care of her attendants. Her recovery was rapid—the domestics removed her from the drawing-room—and the strange appa-

rition in the dressing-gown and I, remained *vis-à-vis*.

As I had the advantage of a recent *escapade*, it might have been imagined that in this dilemma I should profit by experience; but in my life, I never felt so craven and cast down. As yet neither had uttered a syllable; and I waited in fear and trembling for the spectral intruder to open his battery. I endeavoured to rally my sinking courage—I strove to look boldly in the old man's face—mine met his withering glance—I dropped my eyes again,—and I would rather have tried conclusions with Daly and O'Moore in a saw-pit, than stand the blighting look with which this formidable personage appeared to search my very soul.

"Who are you?" was the first question asked, in tones so sepulchral, that they jarred through my system like the shock of a torpedo. I made no reply—and again the question was repeated, "Who are you?"

"A gentleman."

"Umph! that term now-a-days is a very general one. From your trappings I presume you are a soldier."

"You have guessed rightly," I replied.

"What brought you to this apartment?"

"Accident."

"I disbelieve it. Say, was it an invitation from the mistress or the maid—or better still, a joint one?" inquired the old man bitterly.

"I have answered your question, and your inference is incorrect."

"Oh! possibly it may be so," said he of the dressing-gown. "It is part of your creed, I have been told, young gentleman, to lie in love affairs—the end sanctifies the means, and that's sufficient—What is your name?"

"That you will excuse my mentioning."

"But for what purpose did you come to this apartment? that I must know."

"Tell me first the right, by which you assume a privilege of interrogating me as you have done."

"So," exclaimed the old man sarcastically, "I must establish a right of ownership—and to which of those concerns, worthy sir—the chamber, or the lady?"

"To both," I returned dryly, "if you require any information from me."

"Well then, fair sir—I must gratify you—

and submit my pretensions for exercising some small control over both. This chamber is my drawing-room—the lady is my daughter."

"I stand corrected, sir; and if you will rest yourself upon the sofa—as your feet appear infirm — I shall answer your queries as fully as I can—"

"Or the lady's reputation warrants," added the old gentleman with much severity.

"You are totally in error, sir. Be seated; hear me calmly, and I will reply honestly."

"Fairly promised. Who are you?"

"A British officer, rescued from the street by your humanity; and who—"

"Would repay the obligation by depriving me of my child," he added.

"You wrong me, sir," I exclaimed passionately—"you do, by Heaven! I never contemplated—never dreamed of so much villany. You wrong me—but worse far, you wrong your daughter."

"Then why are you here? Why did I surprise you pressing your suit—my eyes, though aged, do not commonly deceive me."

"On this occasion they have," I returned;

"I was bidding my kind benefactress farewell, and pressing on her acceptance the poor token of a soldier's gratitude—a paltry cross picked off the field of battle. At that very moment I was leaving her—a moment later, and you would have found her alone."

"Umph! Have you told me all?"

"I have, by my honour!"

"Annette, of course, assisted you?" he said, quietly.

"She did not; guided by the strings of the guitar, I found my way to the drawing-room." He twitched his features as if in pain—I remarked it; and stooping on the floor, arranged a hassock for his foot to rest upon. He looked at me with some shade of kindness—the slight attention was not lost.

"Ay," he muttered, "a softer hand should have done that"— and then continued in a tone of voice, less marble than that with which he had hitherto addressed me—"Are your wounds healed?"

"Thanks to the care bestowed upon me in this house, they are nearly so; and I shall in a few days be enabled to rejoin my regiment,

in time I hope to witness the close of the campaign."

"And was not," said the old man, "two days' butchery, such as the world has rarely witnessed, enough to gorge you, boy, but you must already pant for fresh slaughter?"

I was silent.

"Where do your parents live? could they not have given you some honester and safer calling?"

"They are dead—my profession was my own free choice."

"Where did they live?"

"In Ireland."

"What was your father?"

"A soldier."

"Umph! Did he die upon the field."

"Alas! no—he fell by the hand of an assassin."

"Your mother, boy?" he exclaimed sharply —"who was your mother?"

"An Englishwoman."

The stranger grew pale.

"You are unwell, sir?"

"Yes, ring the bell."

I did so, and Robert answered it.

"Bring some wine and water here."

It was done—the old man waved his hand faintly—the servant obeyed—and once more we were left together.

He remained for a long time silent—then beckoned me to fill a glass of wine, which I presented, and he drank. Turning his eyes upon my face, he scrutinized it, as if he would have examined every feature separately. "Great God!" he murmured, "a son the image of the father." Then, resuming his customary coldness, he remarked—"You lost your parents when young?"

"Yes—I was an orphan from the cradle."

"You have relatives, no doubt. In what degree does the nearest stand—who is he?"

"I can tell his name," I replied, "but nothing more. If you ask for my kindest kinsman, I have an uncle who watched over me like a parent, and for him I entertain a son's regard."

"Pshaw! I know him," said the senior with great bitterness—"a blundering, thin-skinned

savage, who either does not understand English, or tortures civil language into premeditated insult. They call him Manus."

I was thunderstruck, and stared at him of the dressing-gown. He proceeded.

"But, as I infer from your answer, you have another and a nearer relative. Describe him."

"That I am unable to do—I never saw him."

"Indeed—and yet he is more closely allied to you, it seems, than the crazy islander who adopted you."

"A near relative he is assuredly," I answered, "and I might apply to him Hamlet's phrase,

"A little more than kin, and less than kind."

"Umph! he had his reasons, no doubt."

"None for abandoning me. If my parents sinned, it was hard to visit the unborn, with their offending."

"Have you sought out this stern relative—Did you endeavour to propitiate him—did you consult him on your course of life?"

"Not I, by Heaven!" I exclaimed; "Where-

fore should I? He who was deaf to a daughter's prayer, was not likely to be moved by a grandchild's. My father humbled his proud spirit, and he was repelled; my mother supplicated his forgiveness, and he refused it; I had nothing but unkindness to expect, and why should I stoop to kiss the hand that spread thorns over the dying-pillows of my parents? No—with only the inheritance of a name—nothing to hold my way through life with but youth, health, and my sword—let that unrelenting man, dispense wealth and lands as he lists, the son shall never stoop lower than the father."

I had warmed insensibly during our *tête-à-tête*, for, he of the dressing-gown, struck a thrilling chord when he recalled the unhappy histories of my parents. A twinge of gout appeared to agonize his features; he groaned as if in pain; I was about to offer him assistance, when the door opened, and another person joined us—it was Emily.

When her light figure crossed the room, the old man made a strong effort to recover his customary calmness. The tone of his voice as he addressed her, was different from any I had

heard him use before, although it was broken and subdued—" My dear love, what brings you here ?"

" Then you are no longer angry with me, father,"—she replied, bending her rosy lips until they rested on his cheek. " Alas ! you wronged me—and you wronged this gentleman, when you imagined our interview was aught but accidental—had I suspected there was impropriety in his visit, believe me I would have declined it, and given you no reason for displeasure."

" My sweet love," said the old man, " appearances were unfavourable — yet, I should have known you better. But remember, Emily," and his voice sank, " I loved *once* and was deserted. *Should you too forget me*, —I have not firmness to bear it as I ought, and it would kill me. Oh God ! how similar the scene that nineteen years since left me forlorn and comfortless. But then I had a heart could suffer and conceal it—a resolution that human weakness could not subdue. Now I am a broken reed—a nerveless dotard. Yet, Emily— you will close the old man's eyes—you will hang

over his bed, and on you his dying look will turn, as upon the last object that bound him to the earth. Pshaw! this is womanish—disease unstrings the nerves, and we become unable to rally our spirits when we need them most. I want no explanation from you, love. This gentleman has been candid, and removed every latent doubt. Retire to your chamber. Forgive the pain I have unintentionally caused—I have some few questions to ask this youth; and our conversation, as it will be brief, so also shall it be free from anything of unkindness."

But the fair girl still lingered, and appeared anxious to communicate something which she found difficulty in expressing.

"Father, I am probably more to blame than you yet know—but it may not be too late to retrieve my error, if it be one. I have accepted this present from——" and her eyes fell upon the carpet, while she placed the cross within his hand.

"Whence came this?" he said, presenting it to me?

"It was a relic from the field of battle, and I offered it to my kind benefactress as a memorial of my gratitude."

He of the dressing-gown examined the cross of the Legion of Honour with indifference —"And this," he said, "was rudely torn from the breast of the expiring fool, who, on an hundred occasions, had encountered death and suffering to win the bauble! Such is war—such is glory, my friend! And, Emily, would you wish to keep this memorial of bloodshed—or, to call it by its milder title, victory?"

She cast her eyes down, while her pale and agitated features were crimsoned.

"Speak, Emily—and speak fearlessly."

"I would retain it," she said faintly, "if you permitted."

The old man handed her the cross: "Keep it, child—it will do less mischief among a woman's fooleries, than as the prize for murder and devastation, for which it was originally designed. And now, my love, good night!"

She bent her head down upon his bosom, while he affectionately commended her to the care of Heaven; then turning, presented her hand to me, which I pressed in mine.

"Farewell, sir; I trust your recovery will be rapid as we all wish it;" and with a graceful obeisance she left the room: and the old gentle-

man of the dressing-gown and I were once more companions.

It was strange how suddenly his bearing altered. No longer morose and cynical, he turned the conversation with great art, till by degrees, he got me to speak upon the leading incidents of my life. Need I say it was rather a general narrative than a faithful detail, and that certain passages were entirely omitted—among these, my earlier adventures in the militia, and the supper at the Rainbow, were included. "On their own merits modest men are dumb;" and I neither chronicled my proficiency at piquet, nor even hinted at the superior *ton* of my London acquaintances. After an hour's conversation, he intimated a wish to retire; and telling me that Robert would speedily attend to light me to my chamber, pressed my hand within his trembling grasp, muttered a "God bless you!" and glided stiffly through the same side-door by which he had made his unexpected *entrée*.

I remained ten minutes alone—who were these singular people? The old man knew my uncle—the girl's face was decidedly that of an

acquaintance. Surely some of the music-books or portfolios would bear their owner's name. I turned over three or four without success—at last, in the fly-leaf of an album, a name appeared—it was Emily Clifden. The mystery was over. The fair girl I had so singularly discovered was the adopted daughter of Mr. Harrison—and stranger still, I had braved the anger and won the blessing of my grandfather! While lost in a sea of thoughts and phantasies, the door opened, and Robert entered with a taper.

The domestic's manners had undergone a marvellous change; I expected from him reproaches if not insolence—but he very ceremoniously showed me to my apartment, assisted me to undress, bandaged my arm, wished me a respectful good-night, and vanished.

I was agitated and disinclined to sleep—for an hour I paced the room—my brain was in a whirl, and fancy commenced castle-building. It was desirable that I should not allow my recovery to be retarded, and I determined to compose myself to rest. A sedative was on the table; and, though I had discontinued it, I

thought an opiate would now be serviceable. Accordingly, I swallowed the potion, tumbled into bed, fell into a profound sleep, and before I unclosed my eyes, the sun had risen splendidly over the fair city, and all but "the old and weary" had for hours been engaged in the endless anxieties of existence.

CHAPTER XIII.

DEPARTURES—LETTERS—ADVANCE OF THE ALLIES UPON PARIS.

Falstaff.—Thou 'lt forget me when I am gone.

Doll.—By my troth, thou 'lt set me a weeping, an' thou sayst so: prove that I ever dress myself handsome till thy return. SHAKSPEARE.

If thou hadst died as honour dies,
Some new Napoleon might arise
To shame the world again:
But who would soar the solar height,
To set in such a starless night?
Ode to Napoleon Bonaparte.

I THOUGHT that Robert was unusually long in making his appearance. My watch had run down, but the sunbeams on the wall told plainly that morning was far advanced. I seized the large hand-bell upon my table, and after sounding "a loud alarum," the Belgian "spider-brusher" answered the summons.

She was the bearer of two packets — one having the well-known superscription of my loving cousin "Jack the Devil," while the other was directed in stiff old-school characters, and with the impress of "a seal-ring of my grandfather's, worth forty marks." The Flemish hand-maiden acquainted me that one epistle had been given her by a soldier, and the other by Robert, with an injunction that it should be safely delivered to me when awake, but that on no account should I be disturbed. Furthermore, it appeared that the young lady sent me her regards, and a caution against travelling too speedily; and that she seemed much distressed at leaving Brussels.

"Leaving Brussels!" I exclaimed, as I sprang bolt upright on my bed.

"Why, yes—at leaving the city"—replied the attendant. "It was quite sudden: at bed-time nobody in the house had even a suspicion that the family would move for days. At day-light the servants were called up, the baggage packed, and at seven o'clock the carriage drove from the door."

I was thunderstruck! I broke the old man's

billet: it was short and didactic—contained an acknowledgement of our relationship, and a wish for my prosperity—some good advice, and a caution against gallantry and play—intimated that on my good conduct his future consideration depended—desired me to draw annually on Puget, Bainbridge, and Co. for two hundred pounds, and inclosed a year's subsidy in advance. He requested me to write to him quarterly, and concluded by saying that "Miss Clifden sent her compliments."

I let the letter fall upon the counterpane. The relation I had so strangely discovered, had vanished like a spectre; and Emily, whom I loved with the youthful ardency of early passion, was spirited away, and not a hope held out that I should ever see her again. My first thought was an instant pursuit. But what end would be answered, even if I did overtake them? I should probably irritate the old gentleman beyond forgiveness. The attempt was madness; I abandoned it; and, like a whipped schoolboy, flung the letter and enclosure on the table.

The epistle of my worthy kinsman next presented its well-remembered hieroglyphics; I

could have sworn to his hand-writing in a court of justice, for, among the eternity of Blakes, none wrote like "Jack the Devil."

The information this letter contained was varied and extensive. The opening report upon the state of the kennel and stud was satisfactory; the pack was healthy, the young horses promising, and the huntsman had recovered the full use of his damaged limb. My uncle Manus had been confined with gout, and at feud with a Mr. O'Sullivan of "the Blazers," touching the royalties of a fox-cover, to which the rival kennels asserted claims. Manus had established his manorial prerogatives; and there was greater joy at Castle Blake for this important achievement, than the victory of Waterloo had occasioned. My aunt's health, spiritual and corporeal, was excellent; the jubilee had gone off with *éclat*, to the great comfort of all true catholics; and a month's spa-drinking at Outerarde, had fully re-established the good lady's stomach, which the previous abstinence, consequent upon religious operations, had sadly disorganised. Father Roger was once more do-

mesticated in the mansion, and Denis O'Brien in full force.

As to Jack himself, he had been obliged to relinquish all aspirations after forensic honours, and, for the recovery of his health, obtain a commission in the Irish Militia. He had been lucky enough to succeed to a company in the Roscommon, unexpectedly vacated by Dominick Bodkin, Esq., who popped out of the croupier's chair in a fit of apoplexy, at the half-yearly inspection, while decanting a cooper of claret. As he died in discharge of duty, the regiment interred him with military honours, and intended to erect a monument to his memory in the chapel of Shinroe. To this distinguished officer Jack the Devil had succeeded; and for the future he was entitled to write himself, "in bill, warrant, quittance, and obligation," *Captain Blake.*

After some trifling notices of sundry female members of the establishment, it would appear that Jack the Devil had reserved his concluding paragraph exclusively for disastrous news. After he had retired from the metropolis for the

advantage of native air, under the advice of the surgeon-general, and with the full concurrence of the board of Alma-Mater, Miss Lightbody had not proved herself a Penelope. She had, unluckily, a propensity for tea-parties; and at one of her *soirées* a misunderstanding occurred among the company, and a young linendraper in the *mêlée* had been ejected from the first-floor window. The citizen, as it happened, encountered much bodily damage in the descent; and, regardless of the delicacy of her situation, Miss Lightbody was favoured with an interview at the police-office, and then and there obliged to give securities for a personal appearance at the next sessions. In the course of judicial inquiry, anecdotes rather calculated to compromise her character were elicited. She had commenced life with a troop of wandering equestrians; and it was broadly insinuated, that in this community female morals were not regulated on the strictest principles of conventual austerity. In short, Jack the Devil was induced to renounce the promised honours of paternity—and the armorial bearings of the Light-

bodys, were not to be quartered in the ancient escutcheon of the Blakes.

But, though my kinsman glossed it over, the wind-up of his letter was of a more serious complexion. The old agent of Castle Blake had died suddenly, and Manus's affairs were discovered to be exceedingly disordered: interest monies had been suffered to accumulate; debts had awfully increased; and for the last three years, the sub-sheriff had been quieted at the expense of a regular annuity of three hundred pounds. Several creditors were now importunate; and of these, the most formidable, both in amount and urgency of demand, was Mrs. Blake Casey, who had purchased up, as it turned out, different securities, and actually threatened to place a receiver upon the property.

These were indeed unwelcome tidings. In the world there was not a man so badly calculated to disentangle an embarrassed estate as my honest-hearted uncle, and the heir-apparent was far more likely to add to the incumbrances than diminish them. No wonder I looked with

gloomy forebodings on the news, and feared that my kind relative, for the remainder of his life, would be exposed to difficulties and distress.

I had nothing now to induce me to remain an hour in Brussels—the tie was broken, the charm dissolved. I procured a private servant, who had lost his master on the 18th—discharged my lodgings at the hotel, packed my kit, and, on the second day after Mr. Harrison's departure for England, set out to rejoin my regiment, which was in the advance of Colville's brigade, and pushing forward direct for Paris.

I quitted the Belgian capital early on the 28th, and once more bent my course through the forest of Soignies, on the road to Waterloo and Genappe. Ten days before, I marched from the city in the van of the splendid brigades of Kempt and Pack; and what a crowd of events had hurried over since that eventful morning! I had fought my first field—I had found my long-estranged relative—I had seen my first love, she who had left a lasting impression on my heart—and I was entering on the busy

stage of life again, but with other hopes and altered feelings.

I made a pilgrimage across the field of battle, and my reflections were far from being pleasurable. A ruined plain was now the sole memorial of a glorious victory. I visited each well-remembered spot—each a scene of sanguinary conflict. Although the bodies had been generally interred, war had left his iron traces behind. Here, on this broken ridge, I had lain with my regiment in extended order—farther, to the right, the Cuirassiers had charged us—across the height in front, the Duke had led us on in person—and in yonder hollow, where the grain was beaten to the very earth, leaving not a remnant of its luxuriance, the last furious struggle had terminated, and with it the hopes of France were crushed.

But the splendid panorama of the battle-field was wanting: no lines of sparkling infantry, no charging squadrons met the eye; the thunder of the battery, the rolling volley, the sharp fusilade of the rifles, were silent: it was now a wide scene of cold and cheerless desolation; and the

narrow theatre, where fifty thousand men and horses breathed their last, had nothing to record the deed of slaughter but trampled fields and ruined husbandry.

I easily made out the spot where I had been wounded, and left among the dead and dying; and the closing act of Waterloo rose in vivid recollection. There the poor youth was murdered, and there the yager was cut down; there I lay in helpless misery, while the guardsman pressed me to the earth; and my deliverers—but where were they?—they had disappeared, unthanked and unrewarded; and even the present to the Belgian peasant, was disbursed from the sergeant's plunder.

While I was *hors de combat* at Brussels, the short and brilliant campaign that re-established the Bourbon dynasty in France was hurrying to its close. The allied commanders followed up their decisive victory at Mont Saint Jean, by a forced movement on Paris. The places of strength upon the line of march, were not permitted to impede the operations of the invading army, as they were either carried by

assault, or, if too strong, masked and left in the rear.

On the 24th, the British advance was in front of Cambray; and as the town held out, it was attacked by escalade next morning. The gate of Valenciennes, and the adjacent curtain, was stormed by the light companies of Johnston's brigade, while the 91st carried the ravelin beside the road of Amiens; and the gate of Paris being forced by Colonel Mitchel, the place, no longer tenable, fell. Next day Peronne, the virgin fortress, was attacked by the Duke in person, and the Guards having carried the horn-work, obliged the garrison to yield.

Meanwhile, Grouchy was executing a masterly retreat upon the capital, and Blucher as promptly following him. On the 28th, the Prussians were attacked at Villers Cotterets; but the French were repulsed with the loss of both cannon and prisoners. On the 29th, the British advanced guard crossed the Oise; the main body followed on the 30th; and on the 1st of July the whole were in position, their

right resting on the heights of Rochebourg, and the left on the forest of Bondy.

As the British army advanced, the Prussians, extending to the right, crossed the Seine at Saint-Germain; and halted on the 2nd, with their right at Plessis-Picquet, their left at Saint-Cloud, and the reserve at Versailles.

While the allied forces were converging on Paris, Napoleon had vainly endeavoured to obtain means for opposing them with effect. The French capital was in desperate commotion; and the legislative bodies, instead of calm deliberation, consumed their time in factious recrimination, or in discussing wild and absurd propositions. On one point only there was a union of opinion, and that was, that the emperor should abdicate. He did so on the 22nd; and a provisional government of five having been appointed, despatched plenipotentiaries to treat with the allies for an armistice; and declaring Paris in a state of siege, they concerted measures for its defence, and intrusted the command-in-chief to Marshal Davoust.

On the 29th, while Blucher occupied the

strong lines in front of Saint-Denis and Vincennes, and Wellington was at Orville, Napoleon left his capital, never to revisit it. After a farewell address to his army, he departed for Rochfort. There he had determined to embark for America in a fast-sailing vessel, and take the chance of evading the numerous cruisers that blockaded the port. Circumstances however induced him to abandon his original design, and place himself unconditionally upon the generosity of England. He did so—and would to God! a nobler policy had been adopted than one which consigned him to exile on that barren rock, where the ashes of the conqueror of Europe now repose.

Davoust, on his appointment, divided his army into two corps, and made every arrangement to defend the capital. To one of these corps, the lines between St. Denis and Vincennes, additionally strengthened with heavy iron ordnance, was intrusted; while the other, commanded by Vandamme, was posted at Mont-rouge. Negotiation with the allied commanders was attempted, and failed. The Prussians attacked the heights of Meudon and

village of Issy, which, after a gallant resistance, they obtained. To recover the village, the French made a sudden and desperate attack at three o'clock of the morning of the 3rd, but they were repulsed with loss. Paris was laid open on its vulnerable side, a pontoon communication at Argenteuil established between the allied commanders, and a British corps advanced towards Pont de Neuilly. Davoust, justly alarmed, despatched a flag of truce to request the firing at both sides of the Seine might cease, and a military convention be concluded. The overture was acceded to—commissioners from the allied army met those appointed by the provisional government of France, and the "Treaty of Paris" resulted.

According to the terms of the convention, the French troops crossed the Loire, and Paris was surrendered to the conquerors. On the 7th, the city was formally evacuated, and the British and Prussians marched in; and on the 8th, Louis XVIII. entered once more, and was received with apparent indications of popular regard.

The rapid advance of the allies upon Paris

was marked by that energy and dash which might be expected from an army flushed with recent victory. A national rivalry stimulated the British and Prussians. Their operations were distinguished by peculiar boldness—and obstacles which in former days would have been considered too serious to overlook, were despised by the daring leaders of the allied forces. No breathing-time was permitted to the beaten enemy—on pressed the allies by forced marches—and before the ruin of Napoleon's army could organise itself anew, the victors were before the gates of Paris; and, the prompt determination with which the powerful defences erected to protect the city were reduced, proved that nothing is insurmountable to courage and decision.

In the annals of war, no campaign on record bears any parallel to that of Waterloo—so short, so sanguinary, and so glorious; commencing with the fields of Ligny and Quatre-Bras, and ending with the fall of Paris. A few days saw the master-spirit of the age victorious and overthrown—a conqueror and a captive—and that haughty city, from whence the

destinies of Europe had been for years dictated, placed at the mercy of those, over whom she had so long and so imperiously domineered. The spoils of an hundred victories were torn from their place of pride; and he who had denuded every other capital to aggrandize his own, was borne on the ocean wave to close his eventful life in hopeless exile. Were a moral wanting, where could so strong a one be found to point the insecurity of human fortune?

I came up with the rear of the British army, after they crossed the Oise, on the evening of the 30th, and stopped at a small *cabaret* for the night, intending by an early start on the morrow to rejoin my regiment, which was but two marches in advance. As all the surrounding villages were crowded with troops, and the hamlet where I halted was the bivouack of a battalion, my accommodations were humble enough. Fortunately for me, the corps that occupied the place were part of Kempt's brigade, and I had known several of the officers in Brussels. Those quartered at the *Aigle Noir* had established a temporary mess, and, with military courtesy, I, a solitary brother of

the sword, was invited to join their rough but hospitable supper-table.

Yet our evening carouse was not so joyous as I had anticipated. The spirits of the company had not that buoyancy which soldiers, when on service, evince. But in course of conversation the cause transpired—that evening a court-martial had been holden upon two soldiers, for a drunken riot in a wine-house, when, in the madness of intoxication, one of them had discharged a musket at the sergeant-major, who was endeavouring to suppress the quarrel. Both offenders had been tried and found guilty; one was sentenced to receive five hundred lashes, and the other to be shot! An officer had gone off to head-quarters to lay the finding and sentence of the court before the Duke; although, from the inflexibility of his character, and the paramount necessity of maintaining rigid discipline in an invading army, no hope of a remission of punishment could be indulged.

The doomed soldier was deeply regretted by his officers: he had served through the Peninsular campaign, and more than once had won and worn a sergeant's stripes. But, though a

gallant and intelligent soldier, his dissipated habits, and ferocious temper when intoxicated, had marred his military preferment; and he who had led two forlorn-hopes, and distinguished himself gloriously in a dozen battles, was fated to end his career ignominiously, and fill a felon's grave!

CHAPTER XIV.

CONFESSIONS OF A CONDEMNED SOLDIER.

Darest thou die?

SHAKSPEARE.

'Tis morn—and o'er his altered features play
The beams—without the hopes of yesterday.
What shall he be ere night? Perchance a thing
O'er which the raven flaps her funeral wing;
By his closed eye unheeded and unfelt,
While sets that sun, and dews of evening melt.

The Corsair.

It was late in the evening when the officer returned to the bivouack of the —th. The result was what had been anticipated— the fate of the condemned soldier was sealed. A pardon had been extended to his companion, in consideration of youth, inexperience, and good character; but to the veteran mercy was de-

nied; and the sentence was ordered to be carried into execution next morning, previous to the march, and in the presence of the whole brigade.

That the death of an individual should create any powerful sensation among men hackneyed in bloodshed and accustomed to scenes of slaughter, could not be expected; yet the untimely fate of their brave but erring comrade elicited a general sympathy. In his own regiment, where the doomed one was a favourite, there was exhibited a general regret; and the very man whose life he had attempted, and who escaped murder almost by a miracle, was deeply distressed at having been obliged to appear as prosecutor, and thus become an unwilling agent in bringing his luckless companion to an ignominious end.

I strolled out from the *cabaret;* the village was comparatively quiet, for the crowds of soldiery were rapidly disappearing, as they betook themselves to their respective quarters, seeking for the night the best accommodation they could obtain. I wandered through the mob of red-coats, hoping I might accidentally meet the

men that assisted me off the field. Every plate that bore the number of their regiment caused me to examine the wearer; but my researches were vain, and I determined that next day I would see the brigade march, and ascertain whether in the ranks of the —th I could discover either of my deliverers. Accordingly, I turned my steps to the *Aigle Noir*, where, in a garret-room, I had been lucky enough to secure a resting-place for the night.

I was within ten paces of the door, when a soldier stopped and examined me with attention. I paused and looked at him in return, for he belonged to the —th. As I scrutinized his features, I thought the face was not entirely unknown; but all doubt ended when the man addressed me by name, and proved to be Macmanus.

"Ah, Mr. Blake, is it you? God be praised I met you! though I have but bad news to tell. Sergeant Murphy, who helped you off the field, is under sentence of death, and will suffer to-morrow morning at the first light."

"Gracious God! is my preserver that unhappy man? Where is he confined?"

"Hard by," returned the soldier. "There is an old castle at the end of the village, where the main-guard is posted. Oh, how overjoyed he will be to see you before he dies! He has something heavy on his mind that he is anxious to disclose—and has spoken of you frequently, but little thought, poor fellow! that he should lay eyes on you again in this world."

"Show me the way instantly!" and, piloted by Macmanus, I reached the extremity of the hamlet.

An old and deserted chateau was occupied by the pickets of the —th. The soldiery were stationed in a large and ruinous hall, while in an inner apartment the convict was passing the few hours that in this world were allowed him.

The captain of the guard had been of our party at the *Aigle Noir*, and consequently I was known to him. I briefly acquainted him with my wish to visit the condemned soldier; my request was immediately acceded to, and I was conducted to the inner chamber, where, guarded by two sentries, I found the object of my search.

He was sitting on a broken bench, and, by the feeble light of a solitary candle, appeared busily engaged in perusing a book of devotion. His uniform had been taken away, and he was now dressed in his grave-clothes—a slop jacket and trousers without lace or facings. The expression of his features was stern rather than dejected—and there was a lofty and fixed resolution in his look, that befitted better a soldier pondering over some approaching deed of arms, than one on whom the world was closing fast, and who must rest in a dishonoured grave before the next sun should run a quarter of his course.

The silence of my entrance, and the deep absorption of the prisoner in religious exercise, allowed me to observe him for some moments. He was calm and collected, for I saw him turn back the page to connect a passage he was reading. I took another step; he raised his eyes carelessly; but when my dark uniform met his glance, he sprang lightly on his feet, and advanced to the centre of the chamber where I was standing.

"Can it be possible?" he exclaimed in a

voice of pleasure mingled with surprise—"Is it the only person on earth that I prayed to see before I died?—Does the son of Cæsar Blake indeed stand before me?"

"I am here, Murphy," I replied, "and deeply distressed to find my preserver in these desperate circumstances. Would that I could breathe a hope! but it would be cruelty to raise any, where none is left. Murphy, your fate is certain, and you must—"

"Meet it like a man!" returned the convict firmly. "I can do so, sir,"—he continued; "death is no bugbear to one who from boyhood has been an outcast, and for eighteen years has had hundreds on his head. Many a scene of blood have I witnessed—in many a deed of violence have I been concerned—death and I are old acquaintances. Did you not fear that the felon's touch would contaminate, feel this hand, and tell me if it trembles?"

He raised his arm—his fingers were pressed on mine—his grasp was firm—his touch not half so feverish as my own.

"I longed, I prayed that accident might bring you hither—my request was heard—my

last wish gratified. How goes the night?" he said, sharply.

I looked at my watch—it wanted but a few minutes of twelve.

"Then have I full three hours to live, and one of them I would devote to a private conversation with you. Probably, if you will guarantee my safe custody, and undertake that I shall neither glide through a key-hole, nor vanish up the chimney, Captain Hayley will permit us to remain for that brief space together."

I made his wishes known, and the kind-hearted soldier acceded freely to my request; the sentries were withdrawn and placed outside the door, and orders issued that none should interrupt us; while fresh lights were procured, a flask of wine sent in, and all that a man of feeling could do to ameliorate the numbered minutes of an unhappy sufferer, was done by the commander of the main-guard.

The convict filled a glass and presented it to me. I felt no inclination for wine, and would have willingly declined it—"Take it," he said, with a melancholy smile, "you and I shall

never share another bottle. Let Cæsar Blake's son, and Cæsar Blake's avenger, drink to the memory of the departed!"

I started—"And was it by your hand that the murderer of my father perished?"

The condemned soldier paused for a moment, then in a cold low voice replied—"The hand that slew the slayer, will never do a deed of death again. Yes, boy, thy father was well and speedily revenged."

"And does not that deed of violence press on your conscience now?"

The convict's brow flushed. "No!" he exclaimed, "that was an act of justice! Pshaw! would I had no heavier care—it costs me not a thought more than the slaughter of that roaming plunderer, whom I cut down upon the field of battle. There was nobler blood upon this hand before it played the executioner, and avenged a murder which the law could never reach. Come, sir, drink—I have other and tenderer recollections pressing heavily on these brief minutes. The living, and not the dead, disturbs my closing hour. I have a request to make—a promise to exact. Will

Cæsar Blake's son grant a parting favour to the avenger of his parent?"

"Yes, Murphy; aught that I can do in honour, shall be done—your wishes?"

"I thank you, sir, I will be brief. This bench will hold us both." He motioned me to sit down—I obeyed; while, filling a cup of wine, he raised it steadily to his lips. "The last pledge of a dying man is yours," he said—"May you be fortunate and happy!" He drank the glass to the bottom, replaced it on the floor, and seated himself beside me.

It was a scene that shall never leave my memory. The large and desolate apartment—the feeble and unsteady light—the melancholy hour—all was dreary and depressing; while in my companion I had avowedly a man of blood—one that in a brief space was to become a tenant of the grave, and food for worms. It seemed a fearful dream, and not reality—I was nervous, dispirited, uncomfortable, and wished some other living thing was in the room, or that morning had broken.

Just then a loud irregular tapping was heard at intervals. In the silence of night, when one

labours under anxiety or alarm, sounds fall quickly and painfully upon the ear—I listened, and the convict noticed it.

"Know you what noise that is?" he asked carelessly.

I answered in the negative.

"It is my shell they are knocking up—and while the hero sleeps upon the field, without a rag around his corpse to fence it for a little from the worms, the convict will be treated to a coffin! Well, it adds to the mummery of death; it has its effect on feeble minds, and serves good purposes. But surely the village was large enough to afford some place to nail those boards together, without letting the intended occupant hear the progress of the work. No matter—it will no doubt be but a rough job, and the more speedily completed—and now listen to me."

He paused, trimmed the candles which had been unregarded, appeared to collect his thoughts, and thus proceeded:—

"I have neither time nor inclination to dwell upon details of earlier life, and my story is simply told. From boyhood I have been proscribed, for before the beard blackened on my face, I

was a homicide. I have been the companion of outcasts and murderers—now dissipating in reckless profusion, and now without a roof to shelter me, or a draught of water to cool my burning lips. I have roamed a leader of banditti —I have headed a band of heroes to the breach —I have marched for days without a biscuit or a shoe—I have revelled in the arms of high-born beauty, while exercising that horrible licence which military usage subjects a stormed city to undergo. Every scene and situation that could steel the bosom and demonise the heart have been to me familiar—and yet one gentle hour in the whirlwind career of this fearful life—one guiltless recollection, saddens with painful thought the fleeting moments I am allotted.

"Three years elapsed after your father's death before I found it necessary to quit my haunts in Connemara. During that period most of my companions had been apprehended, and with loss of life satisfied offended justice, and I had many a 'hair-breadth 'scape.' As the laws became generally operative, the time came when I must seek some safer retreat. I decided on going to the Continent and entering

a foreign service, and soon found an opportunity to quit my native country in a smuggling lugger.

"We landed safely at Flushing. The reckless life of a sea adventurer, was best suited to the fancy of a desperate man like me. Although not a sailor, I had found favour in the skipper's sight. With the commander of the "Fly-by-night" I entered as supercargo, and with a full hold and daring crew we started for the shores of England.

"It was thick and snowy weather when we made the Kentish coast. Favoured by the fog, we ran safely through the Channel, and evaded its numerous cruisers. The lead-line told us we were immediately off our destination, although no land-marks were visible. We burned a blue light to apprise our friends that we were in the offing—a fire on shore answered it—and that fire betrayed us.

"A cruiser had unluckily hove-to in the fog-bank not a mile from where we lay. She noticed the signal—suspected it to be that of an enemy or smuggler—manned her boats—sent them off silently—they rowed with muffled oars,

and before we even suspected danger, we were boarded and carried in an instant. I and some others fought, but the rest ran below, when the first gang of men-of-war's men jumped into the chains of the lugger. We were fairly forced overboard. Every man was left to his fortune—all struck out different ways—most of them, from the thickness of the weather, swam out to sea; and of a dozen driven over the lugger's bulwarks, none reached the land but me.

"It was a wild and uninhabited part of the country where I came on shore, bruised in the struggle on the vessel's deck, and chilled by remaining so long in the water. I looked round for some place where I might obtain rest and refreshment, but through the dense haze not a light sparkled from a casement, to tell that a human habitation was near. It was late in the evening when the smuggler was surprised and captured, and if night found me chilled and exhausted on this wild beach, morning would dawn upon me a corpse. To make an instant effort—to discover, if possible, some place to shelter me, was the sole chance left of preserving life. I crawled with difficulty across

the loose shingle, and directed my course inland.

"I dragged myself feebly on for half an hour; momentarily my remaining strength abated—I became weaker and weaker—no house appeared—nature was exhausted—and nothing remained but to lie down and die.

"Just then the baying of a dog, and that at no great distance, fell like music on my ear. I roused my subdued spirit, and taxed my expiring energies to their utmost—the last exertion was successful; my tottering limbs brought me to a cottage-door, I gave a feeble knock, and sank upon the threshold insensible.

"I recollect nothing more until after my recovery, when I found myself supported before a blazing fire by an elderly man, whose wife and daughter were chafing my powerless limbs, and moistening my bloodless lips with brandy. I was speedily restored. Would I had perished in the lugger or the sea, for where I entered, death and misery came!

"It was a simple and a happy family that succoured me — alas, I rendered them soon superlatively wretched! Yet, God knows!

never did man more devoutly intend reforming, or love a wife with more fidelity and tenderness, than I loved that old man's daughter.

"Lillias was beautiful, artless, and warm-hearted—I was in the prime of manhood, and—is it vanity for the dying to say so?—exceedingly handsome. I told a well-arranged story of my being impressed, of having taken advantage of a fog to quit the ship and swim ashore; and on a coast where all were seafaring men or smugglers, my tale was freely credited, and I welcomed as an ill-used personage and bold adventurer. The old man, my host, had been himself engaged in contraband trade, had saved some money, and now in the evening of his life was enjoying the reward of 'days of toil and nights of danger.' His daughter was reputed among the fishermen and farmers to be an heiress, and many a suitor came to old Hanway's cottage—but I carried off the prize, and wedded Lillias. My success no doubt annoyed many a rival, but they were generous, and all save one forgave, and wished me happiness.

"He was a half-born gentleman, the illegiti-

mate offspring of the squire by the daughter of a favourite gamekeeper. Among the peasantry, he assumed in right of descent, a ridiculous superiority; he felt his dignity compromised by my success, and treasured the imaginary injury, until he could revenge it upon a man whom he equally feared and hated.

"It was remarked that, for one who swam so well, I seldom bathed, and when I did, it was at some untimely hour or unfrequented place. Unknown to me, curiosity was powerfully excited; I was watched, and the secret discovered; for a flogging I received at Bristol for desertion had left indelible traces of the cat upon my back, and I bore upon my person a damning evidence of former crime and former punishment.

"Nine months elapsed; a child was promised; Lillias was overjoyed, and looked with impatience for the time when she should be made a mother; while old Hanway declared that he should be the happiest man alive. The hour of trial came—the nurse was summoned and the doctor sent for. It was past midnight, and all in the cottage was hurry and expectation.

"I was pacing the lower apartment in some anxiety, for the physician had not yet arrived; I heard a noise without; no doubt it was the expected one. There was a trampling of feet; more than one or two were there. I looked from the casement; the house was surrounded by soldiers!

"What could it mean? Were they seeking for illicit goods, or searching after smugglers? I opened the door; a non-commissioned officer and half-a-dozen files stepped in, asked me my name, and told me I was a prisoner; and, before I had time to ask a question, I was handcuffed and hurried off. Vain were my entreaties to be permitted to bid poor Lillias farewell. The soldiers were obdurate, and not a moment's delay was granted; for Fenwick, the scoundrel who had denounced me as a deserter, represented me as a daring and desperate man, whom, unless surprised and secured, it would occasion loss of life to overpower.

"I was marched eight miles before the dawn appeared, when the escort, who were much fatigued, halted at an obscure alehouse for refreshment. They conducted me into the parlour,

and my handcuffs were removed, when a young fisherman, who had been always attached to me, entered and requested leave to speak to the prisoner.

"I rose and approached an open window, where a couple of the guard were smoking. I examined the countenance of my friend; it was clouded with sorrow, and I feared to ask a question. He appeared exhausted by rapid travelling, and unwilling to communicate some disastrous matter. At last, I mustered courage and pressed him to tell the worst. He did so: Lillias had given birth to a boy, and, having unfortunately heard of my apprehension, became so dreadfully convulsed that her death was momentarily expected.

"I stood some moments like a statue; the excess of misery stupefied me, and I was unconscious of what passed around, until a movement of the soldiers, preparatory to resuming their march, roused me. One of them advanced, and proceeded to replace the handcuffs. Suddenly my self-possession returned; I threw the man aside, sprang through the open casement, and, like a deer, bounded across the wild

common which surrounded the alehouse. The guard, astonished by the desperate attempt, were for a few moments undecided: some ran out to follow me; the sergeant desired them to fire: some discharged their muskets from the window, others kept up a spattering fusilade from below; but not a bullet touched me, and in a few minutes my few followers were left so far behind, that they abandoned the pursuit in despair."

I was listening in deep attention, when the door unclosed, and the sergeant of the guard announced that the old *curé* was waiting outside to administer the last consolations of religion to the ill-starred soldier. The intelligence appeared to gratify Murphy, and he requested to be left for a few minutes alone with me, and then he should be ready to receive the confessor.

"Time flies, and I must hurry. In an incredibly short space I reached my home; I rushed into the cabin, and a cry of horror burst from the assembled crowd—Lillias was dead! I flew past those who would have withheld me, climbed the stairs, entered the cham-

ber of death, and satisfied myself that the being in whom the whole affections of a withered heart had centred, was gone! I remember little more. For two or three hours I lay beside the corpse, till I was removed by force, and placed on board a boat, only in time to evade a military party that had been despatched to retake me. The mournful pleasure of following the remains of Lillias to the grave was denied. I was driven like a wolf from the home where I had found the only happiness my wretched lot permitted, and forced by the hand of destiny to plunge anew into fresh scenes of violence and bloodshed.

"And now for my request. The child of Lillias lives, and I had prepared to return and claim him, so soon as I could procure a discharge. Find him out—here are sufficient directions—and, in this belt, the spoil of many a battle-field that I hoarded for my boy." He gave me tablets, and a sort of girdle, which he unbuckled from beneath his jacket—"Will you protect the orphan?—and when you think of Waterloo, remember that he who fills a felon's grave loved to the last the son of his early

benefactor. Ha! the dawn is breaking; see how the grey light is stealing through the lattice! Where, when he rises to-morrow, shall I be?—In that lonely place, where spirits like mine alone can hope for quiet! Farewell! earthly cares and earthly thoughts are over. I have one favour to ask—see me die; but see me at a distance. Mine must be the bearing of a soldier, and your appearance might recall the past, and shake my firmness." Then, with a quick step, he crossed the chamber, and knocked: the door opened, and the aged priest came in: "God bless you, son of Cæsar Blake! Farewell—*remember!*" He wrung my hand—I hurried out—and the churchman and the convict were left together.

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The sun had topped the summit of the distant forest, and shone gloriously upon the glittering ranks of the brigade, as it filed from its cantonments to the plain without the village, and formed three sides of a square, facing inwards. In the centre of the unoccupied space a grave was dug, and a rude shell

laid beside it. I stood on the left of the line, and was quite near enough to witness the melancholy spectacle. Presently the firing-party marched from the centre, and halted with ordered arms within twelve paces of the grave. The Provost's guard followed immediately; and the tall commanding figure of the doomed soldier was seen approaching. His carriage was erect—his shoulders thrown nobly back—his step firm, and measured with military accuracy. I had placed myself on the flank of his own regiment; and, when I looked along the line, every cheek was wet, and every lip seemed to invoke a blessing on the sufferer. The escort halted at the grave, placed the condemned one beside his coffin, and then fell back behind the firing-party. None but the Provost-marshal remained; and he appeared anxious to blindfold the convict, which was by the latter indignantly rejected. This detested functionary then handed the dying soldier a handkerchief, and fell back beside his companions.

An awful pause—a dead silence followed. The convict, drawn up to his full height, fixed

his foot firmly, and, in a voice so clear and calm that it was heard in the centre of the brigade, ordered his comrades to "shoulder!" One hand was placed across his breast—the other held the signal. In a lower tone, and with a quickness that showed him anxious to shorten the ceremony, he gave the brief commands that followed; and what they were, might be inferred from the motions of the firing-party. The muskets came to the recover—to the present—the signal fell—a volley answered it—and, perforated by half a dozen bullets, the gallant criminal did not carry life to the ground.

To place the body in the coffin, and cover it scantily with earth, was the work of a few minutes. The bugles sounded—the word was given—the brigade marched; and, filing off by their flanks, the different regiments took the road to Paris.

CHAPTER XV.

PROMOTION.—VISIT TO MY GRANDFATHER.

He has an unforgiving eye, and a damn'd disinheriting countenance.

School for Scandal.

Why, how now! what does Master Fenton here?
You wrong me, sir, thus still to haunt my house:
I told you, sir, my daughter is dispos'd of.

Merry Wives of Windsor.

Paris opened its gates to the conquerors, and the glorious campaign of Fifteen terminated. An army of occupation, according to treaty, was cantoned around the capital, or quartered in the towns which afforded the best means of furnishing the commissariat with supplies. War "smooth'd his wrinkled front;"

Our stern alarums were changed to merry meetings,
And dreadful marches to delightful measures;

and the victors of Waterloo enjoyed a luxurious

repose, enlivened occasionally by military spectacles and splendid fêtes.

Three years passed. I entered "beautiful France" a boy; I left it a man. At stated intervals I had written to my grandfather, and in due course received punctilious replies. With his approbation, I corresponded also with my pretty cousin, and her letters were *naïve* and affectionate. My interests appeared to be attended to; for in the autumn of eighteen, I was promoted to a company, and transferred from the Rifles to the —— Fusileers.

Yet it struck me as being extraordinary, that my new patron had never expressed a wish to see me in England; and more than one overture to a visit was unnoticed or evaded. He was a strange personage: it was dangerous to force myself upon him uninvited; and better far to acquiesce in his arrangements and submit to his caprice. In this resolution I was confirmed by the counsel of my kind friend Phœbe. She wrote to me occasionally; exhorted me to patience; assured me that I was not forgotten by the gentle Emily; and hinted that the time was not remote, when I should be summoned to

Stainsbury Park, an honoured and a welcome guest.

The regiment to which I had been promoted was quartered in Scotland, and I bade my companions in arms farewell; started without delay for Calais; and, after a three years' absence, rolled over the stones of the metropolis in the Dover mail, and established myself in Berners-street.

During the last year I had heard less frequently from Ireland than formerly. By the latest accounts, I learned that my uncle had become more embarrassed; my aunt more religious; the confessor gone the way of all flesh; while my kinsman with the evil by-name, was "starring it" at garrison plays, figuring in "the Fifteen Acres," * and riding for hunters' plates on the Curragh of Kildare,—and in all these feats he had greatly distinguished himself, if there was faith in newspapers. Indeed, judging from the limited information that had reached me, affairs in Connaught were blank enough: the pack had been broken up,

* A portion of the Phœnix Park, where affairs of honour are generally decided.

the stud disposed of, and Manus Blake's excursions from home abridged to half-yearly visits to the ancient town of Galway, where his person was secured from arrest by a summons to attend upon the grand panel of the county. It appeared farther, that Mother Casey was his chief persecutor; that daily she became more formidable as a creditor; and, since a receiver she had placed upon the property had been shot at, she was deaf to every effort at accommodation. Jack's embassy to Dublin, to appease the irritated dowager, had failed; and, indeed, a worse mediator could not have been selected. He had commenced by horsewhipping Sharpe and Sweepall in their own office; and, of course, had been brought into the King's Bench for the same. With this exploit, all attempts to reconcile Mother Casey had terminated: the relict of the defunct tailor was exasperated by the assault committed upon her attorneys-at-law, and Castle Blake declared by the sheriff in a state of siege; while Jack the Devil was figuring in genteel comedy at Fishamble-street, and practising at country gentlemen in the park.

I might have gone directly to Ireland, had

any interference of mine been useful, but as that was questionable, I determined to wait for answers to letters which, upon my arrival in town, I had despatched to my uncle and his son.

Indeed, a plea was easily found for remaining in England—Emily was near me, and I resolved to see her. The impression made upon my boyish heart at Brussels had ripened into an enduring passion, and the gentle girl engrossed my every thought. Surely there could be no objection to renew our intimacy now? I had conformed to my relative's wishes, and obeyed her eccentric guardian implicitly. That I was here, was his act; for, by obtaining my promotion, he brought me home from service. What course was I to pursue? Should I write to him? No: he might refuse my request, and inhibit my visits. Should I inquire at his banker's or lawyer's? That, too, was dangerous; in expectation of my doing so, orders might be waiting for me there. After much deliberation, I decided on calling at his house. If honourably received, well: — if not, the chances were in favour of my seeing my fair

mistress; or I would meet Phœbe, and leave the rest to fortune.

With a beating heart, I threw myself into a coach, and was driven to Baker-street. I stopped at the well-remembered door; but the house was closed, and an escutcheon between the front windows announced that the owner was no more. I sprang from the carriage. Was Mr. Harrison dead? I glanced over the quarterings of the shield; the arms were those of a stranger. A gentleman entering the next house observed me; and I learned from him that my grandfather had left town a year before, and disposed of the mansion to the late proprietor. What was to be done? Instantly my resolution was taken; and that was, to start for Stainsbury without delay. Accordingly I drove to Berners-street; packed a light portmanteau; left my luggage at the hotel; and departed in the mail, that passed within a few miles of my grandfather's residence.

My journey down was unattended with adventure. Daylight found me at a village inn, at no great distance from the place of my

destination; and I retired to bed for a few hours, although the uncertainty of my reception at the hall prevented me from sleeping. Soon after breakfast, I procured a postchaise from the next town; and a short drive brought me to the old and time-worn gate, which had witnessed my ill-starred mother's departure from her paternal home, a mourning bride and repudiated daughter.

I never felt before the nervousness that now beset me, as the carriage swept beneath rows of elms, the growth of two centuries at least. The day was cold and foggy; the mansion had a neglected look; the grounds were indifferently kept; and there was a total want of the care and cleanliness around, that the park of an English gentleman so generally exhibits. As we passed the windows, my eyes in vain searched for the form I loved; no female was visible; no bustling footman appeared; but, in a large and gloomy room, I observed a solitary personage seated beside the fire in a high-backed chair, and in him I easily recognised the arbiter of my fortunes and the owner of the mansion.

An old servant answered the bell, took my card, and left me standing in the hall. I examined the ancient portraits that hung suspended from the walls, and fancied that every face was frowning on me. Sterner features than those my maternal ancestors presented, were never transferred to canvass by a painter. A distant footstep sounded; the rustling of a silken dress was heard; my heart beat faster; my cheeks flushed: was it Emily? On she came. Pshaw! a grey-haired housekeeper crossed the hall: I bit my lips in vexation. Presently the attendant returned, bowed low, and desired me to follow him.

The chamber into which he introduced me was lofty and well-proportioned, and once had been expensively furnished; but, like things out of doors, it bore traces of neglect. Books were displaced upon the shelves, or strewn upon the carpet; and parchments and papers lay in disorder on the tables. A large Indian skreen concealed the fire-place, and protected the person seated there from the draughts of opening doors. Thither the attendant directed me to proceed: bowed respectfully, and took his departure.

I advanced, and found myself in the presence of my grandfather. If possible, he looked more formidable than when he appeared to me for the first time in our unexpected interview at Brussels. He stared, started convulsively, passed his hands across his eyes, and muttered, "God! how like his unfortunate father!" A long distressing silence ensued, and with a desperate effort I broke it.

"I came here, sir, to pay my duty; and thank you for my company in the Fusileers.

He peered suspiciously at me through the opening of the hand that shaded his eyes, and then cautiously presented me the other: I pressed it. He motioned me to sit down, and was soon sufficiently composed to speak with freedom.

Three years had wrought a wondrous change. Mr. Harrison was sadly altered: the thin, sinewy old man, that spectre-like had crossed me in Emily's boudoir in Brussels, was now worn to a shadow by years of suffering, if appearances were true. Still the bright blue eye glanced keenly from beneath its grizzled penthouse; and, though the frame was sinking fast, the spirit

was firm, determined, and unbending, as when he drove my mother from his door. His address confounded me.

"I expected that this mark of respect would have been shown to me a week ago; but Moulsey Hurst had more claims upon you, it would seem, than the owner of the house of Stainsbury."

I looked astonishment.

"A week ago, sir? you surprise me. To pay my duty to you earlier was impossible."

"Indeed! yet you could find leisure to patronize a gang of scoundrels, that all but the lowest have abandoned. Your success was but indifferent." He looked at me steadily; and directed my attention to an article in a morning paper, headed "Sporting Intelligence." It ran thus:

"The recent *cross* at Moulsey should open the eyes of all to the villany of pugilists. The worthlessness of 'the Fancy' has become proverbial, and the uncertainty of a *come-off* becomes every day more notorious. From the commencement of the battle, it was quite evident that *the Jew* had no intention to win; and

the greenest victim clearly perceived it to be a regular *throw-over*. Among sundry soft gentlemen who suffered on the recent occasion, one fresh landed from the Emerald isle came down to a high figure. Captain Blake has discovered that there are sharper *riflemen* than himself. We trust, however, that the fair *figurante* in Curzon-street, will solace his disappointments on the heath."

I was astounded.

"This is indeed unaccountable. I left Paris two days after the affair in question."

"Very surprising," said the old man, drily.

"It is nevertheless true, sir. The coincidence in name, and the allusion to my late regiment, are indeed remarkable."

"I believe your assertion:" and I fancied that a shade of benignity appeared upon his marble-looking face. "And when did you arrive from France?"

"But yesterday. I called at Baker-street, found you were absent, and lost no time in seeking you here."

"I am glad you did so," said my grandsire; "and yet this unexpected coming precipitates

matters. Sit down; I have much to say, and something to require from you."

"Anything, sir, in which your pleasure is concerned, must be to me a duty."

"Umph! fairly promised, boy. Then you will obey my wishes?"

"Certainly, sir, to any reasonable extent."

"Ha!" said the old man, sharply; "duty with you is conditional; and you will oblige me, provided my request is quite agreeable to yourself. Come, then; listen to me."

He waved me to sit down. I did so; and he continued.

"I shall detain you a little, for I must speak of times and persons that are gone. I had in early life a fond and attached companion: at school and college we lived together, and manhood confirmed a friendship which death alone dissolved.

"Sedley, as my friend was called, was in holy orders, and a widower, with one son. Had he lived, professional advancement would have rewarded his virtues and acquirements; but it was otherwise ordained.

"He was attacked with a disease, lingering

but fatal. In the early stage of it I had him removed to this house, and here he continued till the close. I was constant in my attendance, and in every alternation of his sufferings I was beside his bed.

"Perfectly aware that his malady — an affection of the heart — was incurable, Sedley waited for the inevitable event with philosophic calmness and Christian resignation. One thing alone disturbed him, — the natural anxiety a parent feels when he leaves an unprovided offspring.

"My adopted daughter was then a child: she wandered occasionally into the chamber of my dying friend, and her prattle at times amused him. Once, when speaking of the similar destitution of Emily and his own boy, he consigned the latter to my care. 'Would that the orphan children were destined for each other, and that their future fortunes should be united,' said the expiring father. I saw the hand of death was on him. 'And is this your wish?' I inquired anxiously. He could not speak, for life was parting: he feebly pressed my hand, smiled, and expired. Beside the bed

of death I pledged my faith that his request should be obeyed; swore that the fortunes of the bereaved children should be the same; and that if they lived, they should be united."

I started: a deadly paleness covered my face; and with difficulty I suppressed an exclamation that would have betrayed my feelings. However, I subdued my astonishment; and my agitation was unmarked, for my grandfather coldly continued his detail, as if he spoke of the most ordinary occurrence.

"George Sedley is ten years your senior: he is a barrister; and, from steady and business-like habits, will most probably be successful in his profession. He, of course, knows my intentions respecting Emily; but she is totally unacquainted with the destiny that awaits her.

"In providing amply for my wards, I have done you no injustice. What I have allotted for Emily's dower is property realized by myself; and if you give me no cause to change the opinions I have formed of you, the estates your mother should have inherited, had she not forgotten her parent and her duty, shall, when my brief career ends, descend to her son.

"I have been thus explicit, as you may have taxed me with unkindness and apparent neglect in never inviting you to visit me here. *You* know I have had good reason to be cautious — Emily is another's; ay! sacredly, as if her vows were plighted to Sedley at the altar. Yet he is not likely to win her affections, if younger and shewier persons were placed before her. His are mental recommendations, for in exterior advantages Nature has not been bountiful. Have I sufficiently acquainted you with what is designed for Emily?" He turned his keen blue eye upon me, and I nodded an affirmative. "All now is ripe for final settlement: Emily has completed her twentieth year; my will is made; my properties disposed of. One thing alone is wanting to complete arrangements which have cost me much trouble and deep consideration; and that is, Emily's acceptance of Sedley for a husband. There I dread to meet with opposition: and you must prepare her to accept addresses which the forms of society require to be made. The thing is but a form; Sedley is virtually her husband, for at his parent's death-bed that union was concluded.

This done, another claims her duty, and I lose her. God knows how much the sacrifice will cost me—how much to part with her will grieve me. But it shall be done; my pledge to the dead must be redeemed, and the promise made to the friend of my youth realized to the letter. One thing more: when that event occurs, you shall leave the army. One stay of declining life will have been removed, and another shall replace it; and here you will, I hope, remain a guest, where in a few brief months you may be master."

I was thunderstruck at this extraordinary disclosure, and made more than one effort to decline the unwelcome office he had assigned me. He misconceived me: "Come, you would thank me; but I hate professions, even when sincere; and I do not doubt you. Dispense with any expression of your gratitude. I am ill—agitated. I recalled thoughts that pain me. Leave me: we shall meet at dinner. Emily is in the drawing-room. Ring the bell. Go to her; and break the matter cautiously."

I rose to obey him; his searching eye scanned me from head to foot, and rested on the

rich braiding of my undress frock. Dark suspicions appeared to cross his mind, as he muttered,—"You are young; Emily is beautiful. Beware, boy! *remember she is another's!* and, as you value my favour, execute my orders faithfully. One word more: I threw a daughter off that disobeyed me; would I then spare the grandchild if he played me false?"

The servant answered the bell; Mr. Harrison told him to conduct me to Miss Clifden; and then, as if exhausted by our interview, threw himself languidly back, while I proceeded on my mission.

I paused in the hall apparently to examine the portraits; but in reality I wished to gain time to recover my self-possession, and prepare for the coming scene. "Oh, that I may find her altered!" I murmured. "If years have matured those charms that blossomed with such promise, I am totally undone!"

Mustering a desperate resolution, I desired the attendant to lead on; and hastened to Emily's presence, not to win beauty for myself, but woo it for a stranger.

CHAPTER XVI.

EMBASSY TO MY COUSIN.—MR. HARRISON.

> And yet the worst of it is, I doubt I love her; but I am determined never to be weak enough to let her know it.
>
> *School for Scandal.*

We turned down a gallery leading to the apartment that Miss Clifden had chosen for her own occupation. The attendant asked by what name I should be announced; but I declined his services, and he departed accordingly.

Never did I find myself less a hero than when standing irresolutely before the door of Emily's chamber. The courage I had been screwing up for the interview with my cousin had vanished; and I felt with Acres, that "valour will come and go." Yet to linger

where I stood was unmanly; and, nervous as a school-girl when she opens her first *billet-doux*, I sought the presence of the only woman upon earth that I was prohibited from loving.

She was alone: her face turned attentively on a drawing which she copied, and unconscious that any but a servant had entered, she did not raise her eyes from the picture until I had approached the table. When she did look up, the sweetest countenance that ever ruined an Irishman met my gaze! She sprang forward with a cry of pleasure and astonishment to bid me welcome; while I, oblivious of the pains and penalties so recently denounced against disobedience of orders, caught her to my breast; and while my lips pressed hers, warnings were flung to the winds, and the whole purpose of my embassy forgotten.

Never did an elderly gentleman employ a more unworthy advocate. An hour passed; the time-piece struck a second, and Sedley's name had not been mentioned. Our conversation was unreserved and affectionate—but then a little warmth was permissible between rela-

tives who, after a long absence, had met so unexpectedly. More than once I was about to throw myself at Emily's feet, and avow my cherished passion; but the dread of the stern old man who ruled our destinies deterred me: and though in my own person I might have risked his displeasure, I trembled when I recollected what my mother had endured, and dreaded to involve one whom I loved so well, in a similar ruin to that which had fallen on my unfortunate parent.

Time was passing quickly, and ere long an account of my embassage must be rendered. I tried repeatedly to introduce the business of my interview, but failed; and in the attempt, the name of Sedley seemed to choke me when I strove to give it utterance.

"Emily," I said, while I fixed my eyes inquisitively upon the beautiful face that a playful observation had brightened with a smile; "Emily, you have had a visiter frequently here. How comes it that you never mentioned him in your letters?"

"A visiter! whom do you mean?—the doctor or the parson?"

"Neither, my sweet cousin. A gayer personage far."

"You puzzle me."

"Indeed?"

"Indeed you do. I know of none beside the persons I have named."

"What, none other, Emily? Have you forgotten the lawyer?"

"Do you mean Mr. Sedley, my father's ward?"

"Yes; he is the man."

"Do you know him, Blake?"

"I do not. Pray, what sort of person is he?"

"Oh, a very good, civil kind of gentleman. He sends me harp-strings when I require them; and buys me drawing-paper, and new music. Indeed, he is very obliging; but—" and she paused.

"What, dear Emily?"

"He is—" another pause.

"Go on."

"So very ugly, poor man."

"Now, Heaven be praised!" I exclaimed.

"For what?"

"For making that confounded lawyer such a fright."

She laughed. "I never heard Providence thanked before for afflicting a poor gentleman with the small-pox. But wherefore so particular in your inquiries?"

"I have reason, Emily—and you are likely to know more of this person than you imagine now."

"What do you mean?" she inquired, with apparent carelessness. "Is Mr. Sedley invited here?"

"I believe so."

"Then shall we have a new visiter"—

"Or rather, a new suitor."

Her face betrayed alarm and astonishment, while the colour rose upon her cheeks, as she fixed her intelligent eyes on mine.

"A suitor! you jest with me."

"Ay, Emily, a suitor—and one, too, that will be sanctioned by my grandfather."

I never saw horror so strongly marked as that apparent upon Emily's expressive features, when I repeated my conversation with

Mr. Harrison, and assured her that Sedley was an affianced husband.

"And was there none," she said reproachfully, "but you to harbinger such tidings? Ay! now I understand why every trifle I obtained from London was forwarded by him.—Marry Sedley!" and she sprang from the sofa we were seated on. "No human power should force me to do an act, from which my heart recoils! Blake, I love you as a brother; will you not advise, will you not assist me? I am desolate and unprotected;—the creature of your grandsire's bounty,—depending on his will, and loved by no one but himself. Heaven knows how deep my gratitude has been—how entirely and dutifully I revere him; but never,"—and her brows reddened—"never shall I plight obedience to a being I would loathe; or at the altar of my God, avow love I never felt, or ever could feel!"

All my good resolutions vanished, and prudence was insufficient to restrain me from clasping Emily to my heart and sacrificing all to love.

"Emily!" I cried, "dearer far than ever

sister was, never did I feel my poverty till now. Will you not, then, consider worldly wealth? will you not obey the mandate of your guardian?"

My voice, raised above its customary pitch, prevented me from hearing the door open; and, to my desperate consternation, Mr. Harrison himself was standing at my side.

"It is all over!" thought I; "and now comes notice to quit."

But fortune had befriended me: my grandfather heard nothing but the last sentence — misunderstood my passionate appeal, and thought I urged the suit of my detested rival.

"Thanks, boy!" he muttered; "your arguments are powerful and true; I did not misplace my confidence. Now leave the rest to me. Go — dinner will soon be ready; and I would talk for a few moments with your cousin."

I stole a glance at her: had I doubted her resolution, the look that answered mine would have confirmed me. The old man threw himself upon the sofa, signed that Emily should sit down, and I left them together.

I was conducted to my dressing-room, and there found leisure to reflect upon the singular occurrences that marked my first visit to my grandfather. I loved—deeply and passionately loved!—the die was cast, and if Emily was to be another's, then was I indeed wretched! I was heir to all around me; this mansion and its wide domain was mine; and yet a more miserable man did not exist. What were all these? Probably I was happier without them;—I, the member of an honourable profession, well advanced in it for my time of life, and sufficiently independent to exist without the bounty of any one. Was there ever anything so provoking as the old man's folly!—betrothing infants, and, through a silly observance of a sillier vow, determining to render the being he loved best the most miserable woman in existence. What was to be done?—nothing but denounce the absurdity of the attempt, and boldly expostulate with him on its cruelty.

Emily!—oh, how my pulse throbbed when I thought of it!—*Emily loved me!* And should she be sacrificed? Oh, no! I would follow

my father's example,—spurn every barrier to our happiness, and save her from misery!

Half an hour passed: a bell sounded over the building; a servant tapped at the door, and told me that dinner was served.

I found the old man already in the parlour. The table had three covers; but Emily was absent. "Sit down, John;"—it was the first time he called me by that name;—"we must dine alone, for Miss Clifden is indisposed."

Our meal passed gloomily—my grandfather did not eat, and I was anxious for the servants to withdraw. At last the time arrived; dried fruits were placed upon the table, claret and burgundy laid down, and Mr. Harrison and myself left *tête-à-tête*.

"Come," said the old man, "fill your glass, and drink precisely as you would if among your military companions. My days for joviality are gone; but there is a well-stocked cellar here, and you have only to ask for any wine you choose."

I thanked him, and noticed with regret Miss Clifden's absence. He sighed heavily.

"Yes, I anticipated what the result proved; and for the first time Emily and I have parted in anger."

"Impossible, my dear sir. Trifling difficulties will be smoothed away. How has she offended you?"

"By thwarting the object nearest to my heart. Heaven knows, I once thought that the arrow which would wound me deepest could never come from that quiver."

"But, sir, the suddenness of the communication may have occasioned this apparent opposition to your wishes."

"No, no; her resolution seems fixed and matured; and my last hours promise to be embittered by her obstinacy. Had you, John, but known the sterling worth of the man she has declined, you would readily comprehend how deeply the disappointment annoys me. Will you make another effort,—point out her best interests, and remind her of her duty?"

What could I do? To dissimulate was unpardonable—and I ventured to plead her right of free choice.

"Pshaw!" said the old man testily, "all

this is moonshine, boy! Sedley is prudent, steady, and old enough to direct her; and his she shall be! In the chamber above the place we sit in, I promised to his dying father that she should marry none but him. That vow is sacred; and, were she dearer to me than she is, my will must be obeyed, or Emily no more be mine! Go—try your influence: I am weary, nervous, and must to my chamber. Press expediency upon her—show her where her true interest lies—and in the morning acquaint me with her decision."

He pointed to the bell-rope; I rang, and his servant answered it. The old man shook my hand; bade me "Good night;" told me to remember that this was my future home; and then, assisted by his old attendant, quitted the room and left me to myself.

My resolution was promptly taken;—to see Emily—avow my passion—and, if the old man persevered in his absurd intentions, release her from his thrall, and take her to myself! The world surely was large enough: in circumstances we were sufficiently independent: of

love we should have a large stock,—and love was everything. I fortified myself with "a stoup of burgundy," and sought the chamber of my lovely cousin, to confirm her in disobedience, and offer my hand and heart!

CHAPTER XVII.

MEETING WITH PHŒBE.—MUSIC.—LOVE.—A FLOWER-GARDEN, AND A DISCOVERY.

> But had not thine own lips declared
> How much of that young heart I shared,
> I could not, must not, yet have shown
> The darker secret of my own.
>
> BYRON.

Lydia.—How persuasive are his words! how charming will poverty be with him!

Capt.—By heavens! I would fling all goods of fortune from me with a prodigal hand, to enjoy the scene where I might clasp my Lydia to my bosom, and say, The world affords no smile to me but here.

Lydia.—Now could I fly with him to the Antipodes.

The Rivals.

IT would appear that Mr. Harrison had conducted his *tête-à-tête* with far less temper than I had anticipated: Emily had retired in tears to her own chamber, and the drawing-room was deserted for the evening.

While coffee was being removed, Miss Clifden's maid brought me a billet from her mistress. I broke the seal hastily, and found a few hurried lines, excusing herself, under the plea of indisposition, from coming down, but hoping we should meet at breakfast.

From the attendant I discovered that the recent interview had been a painful scene to Emily and her guardian, and that both were much agitated when it terminated. Susan lingered in the room, apparently searching for something on the music-stand, until the footman disappeared; when, suddenly she threw a suspicious look towards the door, pulled a note from her bosom, told me to burn it when read, and vanished before I could ask a question.

There was no address upon the billet—but the first glance told me that it was from my old friend Phœbe. It contained a brief but urgent request to meet her in half an hour at a coppice she described; and she entreated me to be careful that I was not observed and followed.

I was exceedingly surprised; and before I committed the billet to the flames, as Susan had

directed me, I perused it again. I had been apprized that Phœbe was no longer an inmate of the mansion, having entered into the holy estate of matrimony, and become, for the second time, and under very favourable auspices, landlady of the Cross Keys. Nothing, therefore, but some important communication could require an evening meeting; and, punctual to the invitation, I watched the half-hour elapse, left the house unnoticed, and with due caution approached the underwood, whither I had been desired to proceed.

The night was dark; there was no moon, and the few stars which twinkled in the murky sky, yielded but a feeble light. I had no difficulty, however, in finding out the place, as the clump lay close to the grand avenue, over which I had driven in the morning. I stopped: a man issued from the coppice, and I challenged him. "It is the captain," he replied; and next moment my mother's confidant was standing beside me.

She seemed overjoyed at my return.

"So, Madam Phœbe, you have deserted your old admirer Denis O'Brien again? I

thought I was to be honoured with a *tête-à-tête ;* but I perceive it will be a trio."

" And do you suppose that a prudent woman like me would venture here without my husband? Lord! I should have died upon the spot with terror, in the firm belief that it was the poor colonel, and not his son, that stood before me."

" Am I then so like my father, Phœbe?"

" Wonderfully, in voice and figure. But did I not say truly, when I told you that ere long you would be here a visiter?"

" Ay, Phœbe ; but an uninvited one."

" Is that the case? Well—I hear that your reception was most kind."

" It was more so than I dared hope: but that pleasure has been alloyed, and I have been engaged in a detested office."

" I know it all: I only left Miss Emily just now. Indeed, your fates are singular. God grant they may be more fortunate than present appearances would indicate!—Edward, observe the avenue closely."

Her husband moved to a distance that pre-

vented him from overhearing the conversation that ensued.

"Attend to me—there is no time for anything but action, and concealment on my part would now be mischievous. *Miss Clifden loves you.* Tell me, I adjure you, by the memory of your parents, what are your feelings towards her? Be sincere—and if you deceive me, may God pardon you, for I never can."

"Phœbe, if man ever loved truly, I am he. You only flatter me. How do you know Miss Clifden's sentiments? and why suppose that she prefers me? *me*—comparatively a stranger. Has she told you so, Phœbe?"

"Told me! poor soul, she does not suspect it herself. But am I not a woman? And a dull one I should be, if the events of this evening did not betray the state of her affections. Say what is to be done. Are you prepared to brave the old man's anger? Will you give up certain wealth, to unite your fortunes to those of an unportioned orphan, and see an alien supplant you with your grandfather, and inherit his immense estates? All these consequences are in-

evitable if you mar the old man's plans,—if, in a word, you wed with Emily Clifden !"

"All this will I risk; and, if my inheritance was tenfold, I am ready to make the sacrifice without a murmur."

" This looks indeed like love ! Alas ! poor boy, the warm blood of your gallant father flows freely in your veins ! But if things could be delayed, a short time might avert the threatened mischief. I have a secret for you — one on which every hope of ultimate success mainly depends. Hear me attentively."

At this moment our vidette fell back, and told us that a figure had more than once flitted across the avenue.

" We must part," said Phœbe; " a discovery now would ruin all. Come to the Cross Keys to-morrow. Beware of one; that person is Annette. Ha ! I see the figure moving distinctly.—Farewell ! Come, Edward."

Placing the coppice between them and the suspicious personage, Phœbe and her husband hurried towards the village, and I slowly retraced my steps to the house. While returning, I looked sharply round to discover the

cause of our alarm. No person was visible, and I entered the mansion as silently and secretly as I left it.

I declined supper, retired to my room, and having directed the servant to call me at an early hour, sat down to ponder over the occurrences of the day. My musing was of brief duration: a light tap struck the door; a female entered; and in her I had no difficulty to recognize my quondam acquaintance Annette, against whom I had been so particularly cautioned.

Whether I examined my Brussels friend with suspicious eyes, I know not; but I fancied that there was in her looks and carriage a bold air of coquetry that I had not formerly observed. She came in ostensibly to renew the fire, and it was evident she was in no hurry to depart; but, guarded as I was, I feared nothing from her cunning, and felt, in military parlance, that she would be unable to *outflank* me. To prevent any suspicions on her part, I assumed a levity of conversation, which she freely encouraged; and a smart flirtation ensued.

During our *tête-à-tête*, she carelessly introduced Miss Clifden's indisposition, and addressed one

or two questions to me so artfully, that I found no small difficulty in evading them. Whatever the object of her visit was, she left me without effecting it; and I thought her countenance betrayed evident disappointment.

I went immediately to bed; invoked blessings on my darling Emily; and in my dreams shot Sedley in a duel, and was married and disinherited a dozen times before morning dawned.

I was not the first person in the breakfast-room; Emily was waiting for me. There was a languor in her look that indicated mental inquietude. Yet, were it possible, sorrow had rendered her more interesting: she seemed to me lovelier than ever; and, had I dared, I would have knelt and worshipped at the shrine of beauty. She was paler than usual; but the blush that dyed her cheeks—the pleasure that sparkled in her eyes, when I offered my morning compliments, persuaded me that Phœbe was not deceived, and that my gentle cousin would not frown upon my suit.

"Have you seen the old gentleman to-day, Emily?"

"Oh, yes; I paid him my customary visit. He said that I looked unhappy; and his tone and language were far kinder than I expected."

"We were interrupted, Emily, before you replied to my inquiries regarding Sedley."

"Yes; I remember partly what you asked me, just as my guardian joined us."

"Well, servants have sharp ears, my sweet cousin, and we will reserve your reply until we are *tête-à-tête*. Will you walk with me after I have seen my grandfather? I have an evening interview to speak of—"

"Which I am very curious to hear. I hope you slept soundly last night?"

"No, Emily. Yesterday's events were too important; and my rest was broken and unrefreshing."

A summons from the invalid called me away; and, promising to return shortly to the drawing-room, I was conducted to the old man's chamber.

He appeared feebler and more broken; and when he presented his hand, I felt it tremble in mine.

"Are you unwell this morning, sir?"

"I am nervous," he replied faintly, "and passed an indifferent night. How sped your evening interview? did Emily listen patiently to your arguments?"

"She was too much agitated to leave her room last night; and, this morning, the servants were too often in the parlour to allow me to resume the conversation."

He nodded. "I feel myself growing feebler daily, and it was fortunate that you returned so opportunely. I told you that my final arrangements were made, and all is ready for completing them. All, did I say? Oh, no: one thing is in the way—a woman's caprice. Matters must be ended; and, if I am spared, I shall proceed to London by easy stages. You shall go on before. These deeds,"—and he pointed to several large-sized papers lying on the table beside him,—"these must be settled by counsel, and engrossed. You shall take them to town, with letters to my solicitors containing the necessary instructions. Try your influence again with Emily; and, if it be possible, bring her to a sense of her duty and her

interest. My hour approaches fast; and opposition to my will would disquiet my last days, and leave her an unprotected orphan and slenderly provided for."

A carriage passed the window. "It is the doctor," said the invalid. "Go, John: we shall meet at dinner, if my strength admits it. Reason with Emily; and be ready to leave for London by the early coach to-morrow."

I found my situation a ticklish one enough. I had no choice left: either I must sacrifice my love for my charming cousin, or play the old man false. If I deceived him, and my disobedience were discovered, he would expunge me from his will, and alienate my maternal inheritance to a stranger, to whom my hatred and aversion were hourly becoming deeper.

It is strange what trifling circumstances occasionally decide a man in the most momentous action of his life! While I was musing on the perils that environed me, music was heard from the drawing-room. The gallery-door was open; I advanced, listened, and recognized the symphony of a song I had sent Emily from Paris

with some foreign operas. I paused in breathless delight, while the sweet voice of the beautiful musician sang

THE OUTLAW'S SERENADE.

I.

The moon looks pale, for morn is nigh;
No lights are glancing from the tower;
Soft breezes through the myrtles sigh,
And wanton round thy birchen bower.
My courser stamps beneath yon tree;
The abbess dreams—the warder's sleeping;
Wake, Inez, wake! for moments flee;—
Is this a time, sweet maid, for weeping?

II.

Oh! haste, and leave yon dreary hall,
For tangled glades and heathy mountains;
And when the evening's dew-drops fall,
We'll rest by rills and murmuring fountains;
Where, for the pealing organ's swell,
At night, thou 'lt hear the sentry's warning,—
Thy couch, the wild flowers from the dell—
Thy matin chime, the lark at morning.

III.

Inez! no castle calls me lord,
No vassal serfs around me rally,—
My only wealth, my father's sword—
My only home, a highland valley.
Then come, and wildly live with me;
Haste, love! the tell-tale dawn is peeping;
Come to a breast that throbs for thee;—
Is this a time, sweet maid, for weeping?

I found her ready for our walk. She took my arm, and we strolled for some time through the park, until we reached a thick and lofty hedge that enclosed a parterre from the open grounds. Emily unlocked the wicket, and introduced me to an ornamental flower-garden, which, as she informed me, was confided entirely to her care. It was prettily laid out, and kept with great neatness; and when my fair guide had pointed out her favourite plants, we sat down upon a rustic bench.

"Well, Emily, will you here, among your own myrtles, answer me the question I asked you yesterday?"

"Repeat it." And she became pale as death.

"I will, Emily, at the request of another. Mr. Harrison this morning again pressed me to advocate his wishes, and—"

"Receive a refusal as decided as that I gave him yesterday."

"Do you then reject Mr. Sedley's suit? Will nothing change you, Emily?"

"Nothing!" she replied solemnly. "Weak

as I am, and ill-prepared to wrestle with a world of which I know nothing, fears or hopes shall never shake my resolution: it is fixed—final—immovable!"

"Emily, let me plead for—"

"Blake! Blake! would you urge me to such falsehood as—"

"Not I, by Heaven! it was for another."

"*Another!*"—a burning blush suffused her pallid features—"*another!* There is none in the world beside that stern old man who cares for me."

"There is, Emily; one who loves you so devotedly, that he would resign wealth and ambition for you."

My arm supported her, or she would have fallen. I clasped her to my heart, and whispered, "Emily,—adored one!—I am that man!"

There are times when silence speaks the language of the heart more eloquently than words. She rested on my bosom—my lips were pressed to hers—my arm encircled her—"Wilt thou be mine, Emily?"

She raised her eyes, hid her blushing face, and murmured, "For ever!"

A minute passed: I gazed in mute rapture upon my young bride. She was mine—mine only. What was the world, its wealth, its bustle, its inquietude, to us? The warnings of him who ruled our fortunes were forgotten; and though ruin impended, it rendered the first avowal of mutual love more exquisite. It was the moment of transporting bliss, that man knows but once,—when woman owns a mutual passion. Suddenly, a rustling among the evergreens dispelled this trance of happiness. I looked hastily round, and Annette was standing within three paces of the bench we rested on.

Never was "love's young dream" more rudely broken.

"Bless my heart!" exclaimed the accursed *soubrette*, "I fear I have intruded on you unintentionally." And, with a look pregnant of meaning, she hurried away.

Here was a blessed blow-up—a regular discovery—and all occasioned by my forgetting to

secure the wicket. I execrated my ill-luck, cursed my carelessness, and registered a vow in heaven, that if during the course of my natural life I made love again in a garden, I would turn the key in the door, before I pressed a hand, or "sighed a sigh."

CHAPTER XVIII.

MY RIVAL.—LOVERS' VOWS.

There 's a precious rogue for you!
School for Scandal.

You that are old consider not the capacities of us that are young.
Henry IV. Part II.

Never were lovers more desperately alarmed at the unexpected appearance of a lady's-maid than poor Emily and myself. What were we to do? Should we risk all, and throw ourselves upon the old man's mercy,—own our transgressions, and prepare to bundle off in double-quick, with an assurance from him that, like Sir Anthony Absolute, he would "lodge five-and-threepence in the hands of trustees, and leave us to live upon the interest?"

A little consideration, however, told us, that to acknowledge my barefaced disobedience, and the total failure of his own favourite project, was too desperate a step to hazard with a determined personage like Mr. Harrison. We

must, therefore, endeavour to conceal our engagement. But would Annette become a consenting party to this? We must win her over, if possible. Flattery might do much,—bribery more; and I would make the attempt, and try both. If I failed, why then we must brazen the thing out. What could she disclose? Nothing—but that I had kissed my cousin. Well, it was, after all, a harmless indication of natural affection; and surely an innocent civility to one's relative was not only pardonable, but proper.

In this emergency, I recollected my appointment with Phœbe, and set out for the Cross Keys, to apprise her of our misfortune, and obtain counsel and assistance. She was expecting me. We retired to a private room, and the barmaid was desired to refuse admission to all intruders.

It would be impossible to describe poor Phœbe's horror when I acquainted her with the discovery, and she found we were at the mercy of Annette. "Good Heaven!" she exclaimed, "how distressing! The person upon earth whom you have most cause to apprehend danger from, possesses a secret on which your fortunes hang!"

"Well, Phœbe, it is idle to complain. I know the worst; and, like my father, will dare all, and—"

"Wreck the happiness of a being whose love for you will ruin her. No, no; matters are bad enough, but not altogether so desperate. Had you caution, management, artifice—call it what you please,—we might have hopes; but you are not the man to act with temper, and coolly unmask a villain."

"You are mysterious. Dear Phœbe; I am not so rash as you imagine. Imprudent I admit myself to be; or I should never have been civil to my cousin in the garden, without first bolting the door."

"Confound your *badinage!* Will nothing make you serious? Ay, like the colonel in everything! Here, in this very room, he kissed me, and forgot to close the curtains."

It often happens that in perplexing situations, and when persons are no way predisposed for jocularity, something too ridiculous to resist will occur. This, Phœbe and I experienced; and, notwithstanding the untoward accident of the morning, we laughed heartily at the hereditary indiscretion of the Blakes.

"Now, do be grave, and listen to me," said

my fair counsellor. "What I hinted at last night, I must fully explain, and leave you then to act upon my information.

"Before there was the least suspicion that Miss Clifden was designed for Sedley, or that his suit would meet the sanction of her guardian, I had reason to know that he looked forward to a union with the heiress of Stainsbury, as she was then supposed to be. Trifles, in themselves of no importance, will frequently betray the best planned contrivances; and from close observation I discovered the object to which Sedley's ambition was directed.

"My suspicions were confirmed by his ill-concealed mortification, when, on the return of the family from the Continent, he learned by what singular occurrences you had been introduced to Mr. Harrison and his ward. A letter that Annette dropped, although it bore no signature, showed that a communication between her and Sedley existed; and the allusions to the old gentleman, Emily, and yourself, were not to be mistaken. Accident has latterly betrayed more. A person, calling himself Annette's brother, has met her frequently in this very room; and, from part of their conversation which was overheard, I am persuaded that she is an unprincipled wretch in Sedley's pay, and

placed here through his means to acquaint him with what occurs, and serve his purposes. But farther; through his own agents I have discovered that the affianced husband of Miss Clifden is profligate in his habits, a low debauchee, a ruined gambler. This is all concealed from Mr. Harrison. Sedley is a specious hypocrite; adopts a steadiness of manner when he visits the old man that would lull suspicion to rest, and passes with him as an exception to what youth are generally. That I have formed no erroneous estimate of his true character, one circumstance will convince you. At Mr. Harrison's table his temperance is remarkable; he declines wine, and professes to be a water-drinker: while, here, he indulges with Annette's brother so freely, that on more than one occasion I have seen them positively intoxicated. For my own reasons, I have encouraged them to frequent this house: and of me or my designs they harbour no suspicion. Here they are off their guard; and, for the interests of yourself and Miss Emily, I tolerate scoundrels that otherwise my house should never shelter.

"I know Sedley to be a villain,—but who can undeceive Mr. Harrison? Mine, after all, are but suspicions. I have no positive evidence of his profligacy to bring forward; yet, with ma-

nagement and caution, I am persuaded sufficient proofs could be obtained. No one can do this but you. You have facilities that may render the attempt successful. Your person is unknown to your rival; and I can give you his address in town — that is, his private one, for ostensibly he inhabits chambers in the Temple. Go directly to London; be active and secret, and you will find out enough to enable you to expose your rival's villany, disabuse your grandfather, and save Miss Clifden and yourself. And now, Heaven direct you!"

She gave me the addresses of Sedley and Williams — as the pretended brother of Annette designated himself; arranged a private channel of communication between Emily and me; and bade me an affectionate farewell.

It happened strangely enough, that the first person I met after leaving the Cross Keys was Annette. She was but a few yards before me; and I observed her, as she passed the post-office, stop for a moment, and drop a letter into the receiver. Doubtless it was a despatch to Sedley, with the full particulars of my detection in the garden. I overtook her before she entered the park-gates; but, from my interview with Phœbe, I had already determined to leave matters as they were, and make no effort to bribe

the *soubrette* to secrecy. The experiment would be hazardous: she would betray me to my rival; and, desperately circumstanced as I was, nothing but a bold front would do, and the more indifference I showed the better.

"Annette," I said, "have you received your love-letters?"

"Oh, no, captain; I was only sending a dutiful despatch to my mother. You are going, I suppose, to overlook Miss Emily's flower-garden, and practise 'love among the roses?'"

"I am no florist, Annette."

"Are you not? Then how unlucky that I should interrupt Miss Clifden's lecture on carnations! I am very discreet, captain—how does your flirtation proceed?"

"You are at fault, Annette. I made my cousin my *confidante*, and was describing one of my *affaires de cœur* in Paris."

"Bless me! how innocent and interesting the detail must have been! You are for town to-morrow, I understand from James. When may we expect the honour of another visit? Once, I might have ascertained the movements of her gallant kinsman from Miss Clifden; but I am out of favour now. Adieu, captain! I shall expect new ribands at your wedding."

She turned towards the private entrance of

the mansion, and I to seek my mistress in the drawing-room.

I found, however, that the old gentleman had inquired for me, and was shortly after summoned to his presence.

"Have you progressed better with my ward to-day?"

I shook my head.

"Then must I submit to her caprices. Sedley loses a wife, and wins a fortune that she should have shared with him. Well, the fault is not mine; the act is her own. Are you ready to set out for London in the morning?"

"I am, sir."

"Take these packets; deliver them as directed; and I will apprise you by letter on what day you may expect me. Do you want money?"

"No, sir; your allowance is still at the banker's."

"All the better," said the old man. "I asked the question, for I am ignorant of your habits: you may be parsimonious or profuse, dissipated or prudent; — your faults and virtues are equally unknown. I would speak to you: listen to me. To a certain extent I can make due allowances for youthful indiscretion; — beyond it, I have no pardon. You have been

brought up in sorry schools. In infancy, your uncle's example, the barbarism of your country—where bravery is recklessness of life, and honour the homicide of an acquaintance,—all this is sufficient to demoralize you.—Be patient, John ; my homily is nearly ended.—There are three things I cannot forgive,—I 'll call them by their fashionable names,—gallantry, duelling, and play. Remember this; and, as I would think well of you, avoid them. If you become a seducer, a murderer, or a gambler, before you should heir one sixpence from me, I would endow an hospital—ay, or adopt a gipsy. Farewell ! I feel premonitory symptoms of approaching gout. You must dine with that disobedient girl ; and I 'll to bed."

He pressed my hand, and soon after was assisted by his servant to his chamber.

Should I dwell upon the evening that Emily passed with me? Oh, no ! Hours flew, and midnight came unheeded. The denunciations of age, the arts of an unprincipled rival, a treacherous domestic, a recent discovery—all fearful in themselves — were disregarded or forgotten. I hung over "the sweet enthusiast" when she played, listened to her melody, repeated promises of unalterable love, and heard from her own dear lips assurances of recipro-

cated attachment. What were earthly considerations to us? We created a world for ourselves, threw sublunary matters to the winds, and, in the "madness of the moment," the delirium of my love, I would have persuaded Emily to leave her home and fly with me that night to Gretna.

But, with more prudence than I possessed, she pointed out the indiscretion of the step, and showed me the danger of such rashness. My gentle counsellor's arguments were irresistible, and I submitted to expediency. Our motives, no doubt, were different: love for the old man was hers; mine, I lament to say, one more worldly and sordid. We did not part till the clock struck two; and when we did, in the presence of Susan, we called on Heaven to attest our vows, and plighted our faith for ever.

When I left Emily, I stole quietly up stairs, lest the old man should hear me a-foot at this late hour. My bed-room was at the end of a corridor, and no one slept in that part of the mansion but myself. I found the door ajar, and perceived within "a light and a woman." It was Annette, coolly examining the contents of my *porte-feuille*, which, with my customary imprudence, I had left unlocked. She started

when she saw me, grew red and pale by turns, and looked amazingly guilty.

"You are late up, Annette?"

"And so are others, gallant captain," she replied, as her natural assurance returned.

"I really forgot the hour, until my cousin reminded me of it," I said carelessly.

"And yet, if I recollect aright, there is a time-piece on the mantel—"

"Very possible, Annette."

"Well, captain, how speeds your suit? Is all settled but the ceremony?"

"Phoo! nonsense! Women dream of nothing but love-making. Cannot I consult my fair relative on certain grave matters of my own, but you must fancy that we are sentimentalizing?"

"Will you make me your *confidante?* Phœbe could not serve you half so much, or keep your secrets better."

"Phœbe! she has no secrets of mine."

"Indeed, sir!" and Annette looked archly at me: "then, faith, her husband had better look sharp, and interdict evening interviews in clumps and thickets."

"How you do rattle! But were you found here, and at this hour, what would the world say?"

"Nothing," replied the *soubrette*, "but that the maid, as in duty bound, imitated the prudent example of her mistress."

It was evident from her manner that she would have encouraged a little flirtation, had I been "i' the vein;" but I was so thoroughly apprised of her duplicity, that I could scarcely conceal my dislike. Annette was not without attractions,—I was cold to her charms: my indifference piqued her deeply, and she left me—an offended waiting-woman, and a deadlier enemy than ever.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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